THE ART OF CONTEMPLATION

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TRANSLATED FROM THE CATALAN OF RAMÓN LULL WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY

E. ALLISON PEERS

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PREFACE

In my Preface to the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* I expressed the hope that it might shortly be followed by versions of some of Lull's other writings. This hope is partly realised in the present volume—the first translation into English of the *Art of Contemplation*, which may be described as an attempt to guide the mystically-minded reader in the practice of mental prayer.

The translation (apart from the correction of a very few erroneous readings) follows the original Catalan very closely, since no other reliable version in any language is accessible. The critical text of the Comissió Editora Lulliana (Palma de Mallorca, 1914) has been used, by the kind permission of Mn. Salvador Galmés and his colleagues. To these, to Dr. I. G. Llubera, and to the Rev. E. Iliff Robson, who has read the translation in manuscript, I owe the warmest thanks.

E. ALLISON PEERS.

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THE ART OF CONTEMPLATION

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

THE *Art of Contemplation* and the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* are two *fioretti* plucked from the work of an early Franciscan martyr, Ramón Lull, who was known to his own thirteenth century, as well as to later ages, as the 'Apostle of Africa.' In an introductory essay to our translation of the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*[1] we have already sketched the main outlines of Ramón's life and given some idea of his many-sided genius—his erudition, devotion, energy, patience, practical-mindedness, and unconquerable zeal. We have outlined also the plot of the prose romance *Blanquerna* (*c.* 1283), of which both these little classics form a part, and which we hope at some future

[1] S.P.C.K., 1923.

date to publish in full. It is fitting, meanwhile, that the *Art of Contemplation* should be read side by side with the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, for by reading the latter only it is impossible to gain an adequate impression of its author's mind.

I

Blanquerna, the hero of Lull's romance, has reigned long as Pope, but never once has he forgotten his earnest desire to live the life of a hermit. He calls together his cardinals, therefore, acquaints them with his intention of resigning his high office, and, after taking affectionate leave of them all, clothes himself in the garments of humility, commends his successor to God, and leaves the city of Rome. We follow him to his new abode—a quiet retreat in the vicinity of an ancient chapel—and see him in his cell, attended only by one servant, a deacon who loves him so greatly that he has refused to leave him. It is here that Blanquerna betakes himself to contemplation, the first-fruits of which are given to us in the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* and the *Art of Contemplation*.

It is needless to say that we recognise Lull himself, both in the fervent Lover of the earlier book and in the hermit whose personality fills the latter. The two opuscules are in some sense complementary. In the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* we see the Lover clad in vest, coat, and mantle of love, seeking the Beloved ever, striving with Him, resting in Him, communing with Him: living, in short, the life of love. The spirit and essence of the book are in words like these:

> The Lover cried aloud to all men, and said: 'Love bids you ever love: in walking and sitting, in sleeping and waking, in buying and selling, in weeping and laughing, in speech and in silence, in gain and in loss,—in short, in whatsoever you do, for this is Love's commandment.' [1]

This mystical life of love the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* reveals in a series of meditations whose vividness and simplicity seem for brief moments to part the veil which hides it from all but the few. We see in it Lull the mystic in his life.

The *Art of Contemplation* has its golden passages also: passages unrivalled for eloquence, even in the earlier book; prayers (and

[1] *Op. cit.*, § 78.

the whole book is in some sort a prayer) which beat upon the very gates of Heaven. But its appeal is not primarily that of arresting images or sudden flashes of vision : its aim is not so much to *move* the heart to contrition and the eyes to tears[1] as to *teach* men to love, to *teach* men to pray—the rest will follow. We see in it, then, Lull the mystic as a teacher.

The *Art* strengthens the mystical appeal of the earlier book by showing us that didactic element which is implicit in it. Its intellectual language supplements the almost purely affective language of the *Lover and the Beloved*. A union of the two reveals the complete mystic.

That Ramón's enthusiasm as a teacher was equalled by his skill the records of his life alone will show. If his one consuming desire was to lead unbelievers into the way of truth, that of guiding believers along the same way came scarcely second to it. To achieve the former aim his practical mind devised, not merely personal preaching tours, but the establishment of colleges for the training of others in languages and science. The same practical considerations guided him in his second aim. He saw the importance

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

of method; and, without perhaps even envisaging so great a *chef-d'œuvre* as the Ignatian Exercises, he set to work to show the believer ſtep by ſtep how to practiſe contemplation, to devise methodical lines along which he might work. 'So high and excellent,' begins the Prologue:

> So high and excellent is our Sovereign Good, and so low is man through his guilt and sins, that oftentimes it befalls a hermit or a holy man to be greatly impeded in lifting up his soul to contemplate God; and since an art or method in this business is of great help therein, Blanquerna fell to considering how he might make an Art of Contemplation.

The remainder of the Prologue explains the scheme of the book, and the method of contemplating the Divine Essence, as it were, from divers facets, by means of the Divine Virtues. Let it be noted, however, that Lull does not begin his book without emphasising the importance of external conditions, counselling his would-be myſtic to avoid 'repletion or overmuch grieving,' and places wherein is 'buſtle and noise or excess of heat or cold.' The reader of *Blanquerna* is at once reminded of the passage in which is described the author's own practice of choosing the hours of night, the solitary terrace,

and the starlight as conditions most favourable to his contemplation.[1]

This book, then, which we have before us is a practical manual, a text-book of method. It was not written primarily to be read for the beauty of its language—though such beauty it has—nor for the clear if infrequent glimpses which it gives of the far-off states of ecstasy and union attained. It was written to be followed and practised as Lull himself had practised it. With him it had proved successful :

> Because he followed an Art in his contemplation, did Blanquerna so abound in the contemplation of his Beloved that his eyes were ever in tears and his soul was filled with devotion, contrition and love.

He passes it on, therefore, to others, pausing nevertheless to warn them by his own experience not to be content with anything less than practice :

> And when [Blanquerna] had ended his prayer, he wrote down the substance of his contemplation, and afterwards read that which he had written ; but in his reading he had less of devotion than in his contemplation. Wherefore less devout contemplation is to be had in reading this book than in contemplating the arguments set forth therein ; for in contemplation the soul soars

[1] Cit. *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, pp. 12–13.

higher in remembrance, understanding and love of the Divine Essence, than in reading the matter of its contemplation.

II

At first sight the book might seem to be wholly intellectual, and the reader entirely ignorant of mediæval literature is undoubtedly bewildered by its apparently mechanical divisions and devices, even if he is at home with its philosophical language. Reading the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, one is apt to forget that Lull was a mathematician of repute, author of the forbidding *Arbre de Sciencia*,[1] and the framer of an *Arte General* or *Arte Magna*, which, with its mysterious triangles, circles, quadrangles, schematic tables, diagrammatic trees, and mathematical formulæ, was to conquer all knowledge and convert the entire world. From such encyclopædic extravagances one turns back with relief to the calm of the *Art of Contemplation*, and soon masters its phraseology with comparative ease. It is then that

[1] The index to which in the latest edition (Mallorca, 1917) alone occupies fifty-six large pages in small type.

it is seen to be less purely intellectual than one had imagined.

For if in intention the *Art of Contemplation* is an attempt to lead the believer along the Mystic Way, it also enshrines, in fact, the treasures of Lull's own mystical experience. The later paragraphs of the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* show that Lull could not for long write wholly in affective language. The *Art of Contemplation* in its entirety testifies to his habit of mingling affective language with intellectual. In the chapters on Essence and Unity, or in the passages on the nature and the creation of the world, one might expect to be reminded of his little-read scientific treatises. But no greater contrast is imaginable than between a mediæval scientific treatise and the exquisitely childlike prayer which closes the chapter on Unity:

. . . Humble am I indeed if I humble myself to Thee. Lord am I, if I am Thine alone. Victory have I above mine enemies if I can only suffer for Thee. Wheresoever I may be, with all that I am, I give myself to Thee alone, and Thine alone I am, a guilty sinner. Of Thee alone I beg forgiveness, in Thee I trust, and for Thee I incur perils. Whatsoever may become of me, let it be all to one end, to wit, Thy praise, honour and glory. Thee alone do I fear, from Thee alone is my strength, for Thee

I weep, for Thee I burn with love, and none other Lord will I have, save Thee only.[1]

III

The theology of the *Art of Contemplation* is orthodox, and calls for no special comment. But Lull's psychology, which is nowhere seen more clearly than in this book, is of some interest. It centres round the three 'powers' or 'faculties' of the soul—Will, Understanding, and Memory—which Lull took over from his predecessors, but gave them, in doing so, a life and a reality which they seldom enjoyed. They were, indeed, as living personages to him, and to the reader they move and speak almost like the characters of a drama:

'Memory,' said Understanding, 'what remembrance hast thou of the goodness, wisdom and love of God? And thou, O Will, what dost thou love in them?' . . . With these words and many others did Memory reply to Understanding; and Will replied in like manner. . . . After these words, Understanding said to Memory and Will that her own state was like to theirs in the contemplation of the Sovereign Good.

[1] In the original, the eloquence of this prayer is enhanced by its subtle prose-rhythm and the employment of rime: one instance among many of the Arabic influences which pervade Lull's work.

While the Understanding of Blanquerna reflected, and mentally spake to his Will the afore-mentioned words, the Will replied by asking if it were a licit thing to love nought else save only God. The Understanding answered and said that it might love all things created so that it loved them with respect to God. . . . As the Understanding and the Will of Blanquerna thus discoursed, the Memory recalled how in the Commandment it is said that man is to love God with all his soul. . . .

By an examination of such passages, which abound, much may be discovered concerning the part played by these faculties in the psychology of contemplation. We will content ourselves, however, in this brief sketch, with remarking on Lull's voluntarism.

The will is to him the most potent of the soul's powers, the power that directs and guides it, aright or astray, and thus the mainspring of action, the governor of the life. Let it further be noted that he writes interchangeably of 'will' and 'love'[1]—there is the key to his thought. 'The Power, Wisdom and Love of God commanded the Will to love God with the whole heart.' 'God commands the Will that man shall love his neighbour even as himself.' So the reader finds himself being led back to the character-

[1] In both Catalan and Castilian there is a verb which is interchangeably used of either, so that Lull is only following the genius of his language here, if he also goes beyond it.

istic position of the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*—to its very heart: the love and service of God is man's very life. 'He who loves not lives not.'

IV

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if, even in this treatise of contemplation, there are unmistakable and frequent allusions to the conversion of unbelievers, which to Lull was love's chief practical expression. Those schemes which for so long he had nurtured, which had become all but a part of himself, had not, at the time when *Blanquerna* was written, been subjected to the rebuffs and repeated rejections which moved him in later years (notably in the *Desconort*) to write so bitterly. But they were ever in his mind, and he let no occasion slip of commending them to the minds of others. So let any who look with disfavour upon (for example) his 'manner of contemplating by iij and iij the virtues of God,' consider the end to which such contemplation leads:

Wherefore . . . to Thee, O Love, O Virtue, O Truth, I bind and submit myself all the days of my

life, that I may honour Thy graces, and proclaim to unbelievers, and to Christians who have lost their devotion, the truth of Thy Virtue and Thy Truth and Thy Love.

Elsewhere in the book he wonders 'how in the world there are so many men, unbelievers, idolaters, and ignorant of His honour'; or 'how many men there are in this world who are unbelievers and honour not the human nature of Jesus Christ which God in Himself has so greatly honoured, but believe not, and blaspheme that same Nature, and hold that sacred Land wherein he took that Nature, and wherein . . . He suffered Passion and Death.' Again, Blanquerna is represented as being gently rebuked by his Beloved for undereſteeming the Mercy of God, Whose Dominion is to be 'revealed and proclaimed throughout all the world.' While at another time he cries to the Juſtice of God:

O Greatness of Juſtice! If Thou wilt have this Juſtice, O Lord God, upon us sinners to punish us, then mayeſt Thou exercise it the better if Thou doſt punish us who know Thy Trinity and Incarnation and yet honour, love and serve Thee not, rather than those who know not Trinity in Thee, and who, knowing not the Incarnation, believe it not.

Such preoccupation as this becomes ever and again apparent in the work of Lull.

V

Both the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* and the *Art of Contemplation* have a vividness of language surpassed by few books of their age. And this is but natural, for the intensity of the fire which consumed the heart of the Fool of Love had few parallels. The *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* is undoubtedly at first glance the more attractive of the two works, but it is in the *Art of Contemplation* and in a few other parts of *Blanquerna* that Lull's skill as a stylist is seen at its highest. The very brevity of the verses in the shorter book is at once their safeguard and their charm. But in the *Art* diffuseness would have been so easy—and in his longer works Lull succumbs to this temptation very often—that we marvel at its absence. This is one of the attractions of the *Art*. Everything in it is brief, clear-cut, instinct with life. As real to the reader as the powers of the soul are the virtues apostrophised by the author in his closing chapters. 'Faith, my

friend,' 'Temperance, my friend': we think of them, in no sense as abstractions, but as the living and breathing companions of the hermit in his solitary retreat. Cut off as he was from companionships of the world without, it is as if those virtues with whom Blanquerna speaks take shape, as he writes, before him, and minister to his needs. No writer has ever made virtues seem more real.

The other striking mark of Lull's style in this book is its originality. Anyone who has read the great Spanish mystics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will appreciate this. Often their chapters are but long quotations from the Fathers, loosely strung together, and hardly even commented. Or they are expositions of expositions, in which the force of the original Scripture is all but lost. A few only of the greatest mystics are free, even in parts of their work, from these blemishes. Lull is entirely free from them. He writes with hardly a reference to the Fathers, with still fewer to any other writer. His *Art of Contemplation*, as well as his more famous little classic, is built upon his own experience, and it is his own personal exposition of the teachings of the Church and the Bible. In the truest sense the *Art of Con-*

templation is as original as the *Desconort* itself: a thing which, though apparently strange, is in reality most fitting. For the one is the spontaneous outpouring of a mind inspired with hope and living in prayer; the other, the spontaneous and bitter outcry of an agonising soul.

BEGINNETH THE ART OF CONTEMPLATION

PROLOGUE

So HIGH and excellent is our Sovereign Good, and so low is man through his guilt and sins, that oftentimes it befalls a hermit or a holy man to be greatly impeded in lifting up his soul to contemplate God; and, since an art or method in this business is of great help therein, Blanquerna fell to considering how he might make an Art of Contemplation which should lead him to have devotion in his heart, and in his eyes weeping and tears, and make his will and understanding the higher rise to the contemplation of God in His honours and His wonders.

2. When Blanquerna the hermit had considered thus, he made by art a *Book of Contemplation*, the which he divided into xij parts, namely these: Divine Virtues,

Essence, Unity, Trinity, Incarnation, *Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*, Commandments, *Miserere mei Deus*, Sacraments, Virtues, Vices.

3. The art of this book is that the Divine virtues should first be contemplated in relation to each other, and that then they should be contemplated with the other parts of the book, the soul of the contemplative being fixed upon the Divine virtues in his memory, understanding and will; and also that he should learn to unite in his soul the Divine virtues and the other parts of the book, to the honour and glory of the Divine virtues, which are these: Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love, Virtue, Truth, Glory, Perfection, Justice, Liberality, Mercy, Humility, Dominion, Patience.

4. These virtues may be contemplated in divers manners, one of which is to contemplate one with another, or one with two or three or more. A second manner is that whereby man may contemplate these virtues in their relation with Essence or Unity or Trinity or Incarnation, and so with the other parts of this book. Another manner is that whereby with these virtues is contemplated Essence or Unity or Trinity or Incarnation. Another manner is in the words of the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria*, etc. A Man may

contemplate God and His works with all the xvj virtues or with any of them, according as he would make his contemplation long or short, and as the matter of the contemplation befits certain virtues rather than others.

5. The conditions of this art are that a man should be suitably disposed toward contemplation and in a fitting place, for by repletion, or with overmuch grieving, or in a place wherein is bustle and noise or excess of heat or cold, his contemplation may be hindered. And the chief condition of all in this art is that a man be not impeded by temporal cares in his memory, understanding or will, when he enters upon contemplation.

6. Seeing that we are occupied in treating of other books, we will but briefly relate the way and manner wherein Blanquerna followed the art of contemplation. And with the first part of the book we will first begin.

CHAPTER I

OF THE MANNER WHEREIN BLANQUERNA CONTEMPLATED THE VIRTUES OF GOD

BLANQUERNA rose at midnight and gazed upon the heavens and the stars, and cast out all things from his thoughts, and fixed them upon the virtues of God. For he was fain to contemplate the goodness of God in all the xvj virtues, and the xvj virtues in the goodness of God; for which cause, falling on his knees, and raising his hands to the heavens and his thoughts to God, he spake these words with his lips and pondered them in his soul with all the powers of his memory, understanding and will:

2. 'O Sovereign Good, Thou that art infinitely great in eternity, power, wisdom, love, virtue, truth, glory, perfection, justice, liberality, mercy, humility, dominion, patience! I adore Thee as I remember, comprehend, love and speak of Thee and of all these virtues herein named, which are

one thing with Thyself, as Thou art one with them, one very essence without difference soever.'

3. 'O Sovereign Good, that art so great, Sovereign Greatness, that art so good! Wert Thou not eternal, Thou wert not so great a good that my soul could fill its memory with remembrance of Thee, nor its understanding with understanding of Thee, nor its will with love of Thee. But since Thou art Infinite and Eternal Good, Thou canst fill my whole soul and every soul with infused grace and blessing, that memory, understanding and love may be given to Thee, O Infinite and Eternal Sovereign Good.'

4. Through the power which Blanquerna remembered in Sovereign goodness, he gained power and strength to raise his consideration above the firmament, and considered a greatness so exceeding great that it had infinite power of movement, like unto a flash of light shining in the six common directions—to wit, above and below, before and behind, to left and to right; and finding no limit, nor beginning nor end. As Blanquerna thus considered, he marvelled greatly, the more so when to the consideration of this goodness he joined that of eternity, which has neither beginning nor end. And

while Blanquerna was wholly absorbed in this consideration, he remembered how great a good is that of Divine power, which can be so great and so everlasting, and whose knowledge and will are infinite and eternal, as are its virtue, truth, glory, perfection, justice, liberality, mercy, humility, dominion and patience.

5. As Blanquerna pursued his contemplation in this wise, his heart began to burn within him, and his eyes to weep, at the great joy which he had in remembering, understanding and loving such noble virtues in Sovereign goodness. But ere he could perfectly weep, his understanding descended to the level of the imagination, and he fell to thinking and doubting how it could be that, before the world was, God should have justice, liberality, mercy, humility, dominion; and, through the alliance of understanding and imagination, doubt chilled the warmth of his heart and the tears in his eyes grew fewer. So Blanquerna parted understanding and imagination and exalted the former above the latter, remembering how the Sovereign Good is infinite in all perfection, and how for this cause, through His own virtue and glory, He may have and can have to so great a degree of perfection all the

virtues above named before the world was as well as now that the world is; only that, while the world was not, there was lacking any person who might receive from the Sovereign Good the grace and the influence of these above-named virtues.

6. Greatly now joyed the will of Blanquerna because his understanding had cast down the imagination which impeded its working and had soared aloft, leaving the imagination behind, to comprehend the infinite power of God, which in justice, liberality, and the like, must needs have been before the world was; for, were this not so, it would follow that in Sovereign Goodness there was defect of greatness, power, eternity and virtue. And since it is impossible that in God is any defect at all, for that cause the will set the heart of Blanquerna so fiercely on fire that his eyes were abundantly filled with tears.

7. While Blanquerna contemplated and wept, his memory, understanding and will conversed mentally with each other within his soul, and they found great delight in the virtues of God, as these words show: 'Memory,' said Understanding, 'what remembrance hast thou of the goodness, wisdom and love of God? And thou, O Will, what dost thou love in them?' Memory

answered and said: 'When I consider in my remembrance how great a good it is to know oneself to be greater and nobler in knowledge and will than any beside, I feel not so high nor so great as when I remember the Sovereign Good, Who is infinite in knowledge and will. And when I consider eternity, power, virtue, truth, and the rest, then I feel myself to be magnified and exalted as I think upon these things.' With these words and many others did Memory reply to Understanding; and Will replied in like manner, saying that she felt not so great nor high when she loved the Sovereign Good because He is more loving and wise than any beside, as when she loved Him because of His infinite and eternal wisdom and love. After these words, Understanding said to Memory and Will that her own state was like to theirs in the contemplation of the Sovereign Good.

8. Memory, Understanding and Will agreed among themselves that they would contemplate the Sovereign Good in His virtue, truth and glory. Memory recalled the virtue of the Infinite Good, His virtue being infinite in truth and glory. Understanding comprehended that which Memory recalled, and Will loved that which Memory

recalled and Understanding comprehended. Once again Memory turned to remembrance, and recalled the infinite truth of Sovereign Good, in the which truth are virtue and glory. And Understanding comprehended infinite glory, which is in virtue and truth, and our glorious Sovereign Good; and Will loved this wholly and in the unity of one actuality, in one and the same perfection.

9. Blanquerna enquired of his Understanding: 'If the Sovereign Good give me salvation, what wilt thou thereby comprehend?' Understanding answered: 'I shall comprehend the mercy and humility and liberality of God.' 'And thou, O Memory, if He condemn me, what wilt thou remember?' He answered: 'I shall remember the justice and dominion and perfection and power of God.' 'And thou, O Will, what wilt thou love?' He answered: 'I will love that which Memory recalls, so that I be in a place where I may love it; for the virtues which are in the Sovereign Good are worthy in themselves to be loved.'

10. After these words, Blanquerna remembered his sins, and comprehended how great a good it is that in God there is patience; for were there no patience in God, so soon as man sinned he would be punished and cast

out from this world. And therefore he enquired of his Will: 'What thanks shall I render to the patience of God which has thus borne with me?' Will answered and said that he should love justice in his Sovereign Good, even were it possible that his Understanding should know that he was to be punished by damnation for his sins. Blanquerna was greatly pleased at the answer which Will had made; and with his mouth and with the three powers of his soul he praised and blessed patience in the Sovereign Good through all the Divine virtues.

11. In this wise did Blanquerna contemplate the Divine virtues, from midnight until the hour when he should ring for matins, and he gave thanks to God because He had humbled him by guiding him in his contemplation. And as he was about to cease from contemplation and to ring for matins, he began to bethink himself that he had not contemplated the Patience of God as highly as the other virtues, because he had contemplated it in relation to himself, as has been declared above. Therefore it behoved him to turn once more to contemplation, and he said that he adored and contemplated the Patience of God in that it was one self-same thing with Sovereign goodness and with all

the other virtues, without difference soever. Wherefore Understanding greatly marvelled how patience could be one thing in essence with the remaining virtues. But Memory recalled that in God the virtues have no diversity the one from the other, but that, since their operations in the creatures are diverse, they themselves appear diverse, even as the reflection of a person appears when he looks into two mirrors, of which one is crooked and the other straight, yet the reflection itself is one, in each of the mirrors, without diversity soever.

CHAPTER II

OF THE MANNER IN WHICH BLANQUERNA CONTEMPLATED BY IIJ AND IIJ THE VIRTUES OF GOD

'DIVINE Goodness,' said Blanquerna, 'Thou that art of infinite greatness in eternity, Thou art the Good whence springs all good beside; from Thy great Good comes all that is good both great and small, and from Thy Eternity comes all that abides. Wherefore in all wherein Thou art Goodness and Greatness, and Eternity, I adore Thee, call upon Thee, and love Thee above all that I can understand and remember. And I pray Thee to make great and abiding that good which Thou hast granted me, that I may praise and serve Thee with all that pertains to Thy honour.'

2. 'Eternal Greatness in power! Far greater art Thou than I can remember or comprehend or love. My power rises to Thee, that Thou mayest make it great and

abiding, that I may remember, comprehend and love Thy power which is infinite and eternal, from whose influence we trust may fall upon us grace and blessing, whence we ourselves may become great and may abide even unto eternity.'

3. 'Eternity, Thou that hast power of knowledge without end or beginning! Thou hast given me a beginning and created me that I may abide without end. Thou hast power to save or to damn me. That which Thou wilt do with me and with others, Thy knowledge eternally knows and Thy power can accomplish. For in Thy eternity is no movement or change. No power have I to know how Thou wilt judge me, for my power and knowledge have a beginning. So, then, may it please Thee, that whatsoever Thou wilt do with me, my power and knowledge and abidingness in this world may be to Thy glory and to the praise of Thine honour.'

4. 'Power, that hast all knowledge and will in thyself! Knowledge, that hast all power and will in thyself! Will, that hast all power and knowledge in thyself! Take all my knowledge and power—for already hast Thou taken all my will—that they may love and serve Thee. Thou, O Power, canst know and will, inasmuch as Thou art without

increase or diminution or any change soever. Thou, O Knowledge, dost know even as Thou dost will. And Thou, O Will, dost will even as Thou dost will in will, power, and knowledge. Wherefore, since thus it is, and nought can make it otherwise or different, may grace come to my power from this great influence, that I may ever have power, knowledge and will to honour Thy power,—to my knowledge that I may honour Thy knowledge,—and to my will that I may honour Thy love.'

5. 'Wisdom Divine! In Thee are virtue and love. Thou knowest Thyself to be love above all other love, and virtue above all other virtue: Thou knowest Thyself to be Wisdom greater than all wisdom beside. Wherefore if my knowledge perceive that my will has small virtue in loving Thy Will, Thy knowledge must needs know that Thy love is greater in loving me, than is my love in loving Thee. And if Thou knewest not this, Thy knowledge could not know how much greater virtue there is in Thy love and Thy will than in mine, nor could my knowledge and will have the virtue wherewith to contemplate God in perfection.' While Blanquerna pursued this contemplation, he bethought himself that if God knew that His

Will loved sin, He would have no Virtue wherewith to love Himself. And thus Blanquerna comprehended, that if he ceased to love God, he would have no virtue wherewith he might cease to love sin. So Blanquerna wept abundantly, when he remembered his sin and guilt at such times as he had sinned.

6. 'Love Divine! Thy Virtue is more real than that of any love beside, and Thy Truth is more real than all truth beside. For if the virtue of the sun be real in giving light, and the virtue of fire in giving warmth, far more real is Thy Virtue in loving. For between the sun and its splendour there is a difference, and between fire and its heat. But between Thy Love and Virtue and Truth there is no essential difference; and all that Thy Love disposes in truth, It does with infinite virtue in love and in truth; whereas all that is done by things beside is done with virtue finite in quantity and time. Wherefore, since this is so, to Thee, O Love, O Virtue, O Truth, I bind and submit myself all the days of my life, that I may honour Thy graces, and proclaim to unbelievers, and to Christians who have lost their devotion, the truth of Thy Virtue and Thy Truth and Thy Love.'

7. Virtue, Truth and Glory met in the thoughts of Blanquerna, when he contemplated his Beloved. Blanquerna considered to which of these three he would give the greatest honour in his thoughts and will; but since he could conceive in them no difference soever, he gave them equal honour in remembering, comprehending and desiring his Beloved. And he said: 'I adore Thee, O Virtue, that hast created me; I adore Thee, O Truth, that shalt judge me; I adore Thee, O Glory, wherein I hope to be glorified in Virtue and Truth, which will never cease to give glory without end.'

8. Blanquerna enquired of the Truth of his Beloved: 'If in Thee Glory and Perfection were not that which Thou art, what then wouldst Thou be?' And Understanding answered Blanquerna: 'What but falsehood, or a truth like to that of thine, or nought at all, or that in which there would be affliction everlasting?' And Blanquerna said: 'And if Truth were not, what then would Glory be?' And Memory answered: 'It would be nought.[1]' 'And if Perfection were not, what would Glory be?' 'It would be that which is nought, or nothingness.'

[1] Lit. *defalliment*, defect; here total defect, complete loss, non-existence.

9. Blanquerna fell to considering colour, and comprehended the difference that is between white and red, and the contrariety that is between white and black. He considered the Glory, Perfection and Justice of his Beloved, and herein he could comprehend neither difference nor contrariety. He considered whiteness, and could comprehend therein neither difference nor contrariety. He considered Glory, and comprehended Perfection and Justice. He considered Perfection, and comprehended Justice and Glory. He considered Justice, and comprehended Glory and Perfection. Greatly did Blanquerna marvel as he considered thus, and in that consideration did he exalt his memory and understanding and will to the contemplation of his Beloved. He desired His glory, and his eyes were filled with tears; and he wept, for he feared the Justice of his Beloved.

10. Memory, Understanding and Will endeavoured in Blanquerna to soar to the Beloved. Memory desired to soar that it might think upon Perfection; Understanding, that it might comprehend Justice; and Will, that it might love Liberality. And none of these three powers could rise above any other, for each had need of the three

virtues of the Beloved, signifying that the three virtues in the Beloved are one and the same.

11. 'Justice,' said Blanquerna, 'what thing desirest thou in my will?' Memory answered for Justice: 'I desire therein contrition and fear; I desire tears in thine eyes, in thy heart sighs, and in thy body afflictions.' 'And thou, Liberality, what desirest thou in my will?' Understanding answered for Liberality: 'I desire to possess it wholly, for love, for repentance and for the despising of the vanities of this world.' 'And thou, Mercy, what desirest thou of my memory and understanding?' Will answered for Mercy: 'I desire thy memory wholly, for remembrance of the gifts of Mercy and her pardon,[1] and thine understanding wholly for comprehension of the same, and these yet more for the contemplation of Mercy herself. So Blanquerna gave himself wholly to that which the virtues of his Beloved desired of him.

12. Blanquerna adored and contemplated, in his Beloved, Liberality, Mercy and Humility, and he found them greater and nobler than when he contemplated them in himself.

[1] *son do e son perdó*, lit. 'its giving and forgiving'—a play upon words which frequently recurs in this book.

Wherefore he said to his Understanding that in his Beloved he could not wholly comprehend Liberality, Mercy and Humility; and to his Will he said that the Mercy of his Beloved had so great liberality that he might take therefrom as much humility as he would, and have therefrom as much Mercy and Liberality as was needful for his salvation.

13. Blanquerna perceived that he was in peril of thinking the Dominion of his Beloved to be greater than His Mercy and Humility, because His Dominion is over all men, while His Mercy and Humility illumine not those that believe not the Catholic Faith. But the Beloved awakened the memory of Blanquerna, and brought to his mind that Mercy made the Son of God to humble himself by taking our flesh, and dying, as to His Manhood, upon the Cross. And this He did that His Dominion might be revealed and proclaimed throughout all the world by those unto whom God has humbled Himself in the Holy Sacrifice, and whom He has so greatly honoured; and His Mercy waits for them to make satisfaction for so many and so grievous mortal sins, displeasing both to God and man.

14. Blanquerna said that in this world it befits not a Prince to have Dominion without

Humility and Patience, signifying that it befits not that there should be Dominion without Humility and Patience in God. Wherefore Blanquerna, as Prince and Lord of his Memory, Understanding and Will, humbled himself, though a prince, to have patience, that he might contemplate Humility, Dominion and Patience in his Beloved from Whom he holds his principality in fief, to give account thereof to his Beloved.

15. So Blanquerna ended his prayer; and, on the day following, he returned to it after another manner, to wit, that he left Patience and fell to considering Dominion, taking the virtues by three and three that he might follow a new manner. And on the day following he considered the virtues by four and four, by five and five, or by two and two, uniting them with Greatness or Eternity, and so with the other virtues. And in every such combination of one virtue with another appeared new argument and diverse material and manner for the contemplation of his Beloved. And, therefore, because he followed an Art in his contemplation, did Blanquerna so abound in the contemplation of his Beloved that his eyes were ever in tears and his soul was filled with devotion, contrition and love.

CHAPTER III

OF ESSENCE

BLANQUERNA began to contemplate the Divine Essence together with the Divine Virtues; and, remembering, comprehending and loving the Virtues, he said these words:

2. 'Divine Essence! So great art Thou in goodness and eternity, that between Thyself and Thy goodness, greatness and eternity is no difference soever. Thou art Essence, and Thou art God, for between Deity and God there is no difference. I adore Thee as One and the Same, as Deity and God, as Essence and Being. For if as Deity and God, as Essence and Being, Thou wert not One, without difference soever, Thy greatness would be finite and determined, inferior to Thy Goodness and Thy Good, Thy Eternity and Thy Eternal Being. Whence it would follow that Thy Deity was one thing, and God another, and the same of Thy Being and Thy Essence. But since Thy Greatness is infinite in Goodness and Eternity, therefore, O Sovereign Essence, I adore Thee

and bless Thee in one pure and simple actuality with all Thy Virtues.'

3. 'Of Thy Goodness and of Thy Good, O glorious Essence, my soul remembers and comprehends that which it can remember and comprehend of no other thing. For goodness and good, greatness and great, abidingness and abiding are not one thing in creatures: were they so, there would be no difference between essence and being in creatures. And, but for this, Thy Goodness were not Sovereign in greatness as is fitting. Wherefore—to signify the nobility of Thy Being and Essence—Thy Essence and Being are greater as being One, than created essence, and created being, wherein greatness is lacking; by which lack we have knowledge of Thy infinite Greatness, and this I praise, holding suspended all the greatness of my will in adoring, contemplating, praising and serving Thy glorious Essence.'

4. 'In the creature is essence distinct from power, knowledge and will created. For one thing is power, another is knowledge and yet another is will. Wherefore essence cannot be one self-same thing with power, knowledge and will. But since Thou, O glorious Essence, makest no inequality between Thy power, knowledge and will, nor is there in

Thy Power, Knowledge and Will any difference soever, therefore art Thou one Essence, and between Thy Being and Thy Power, Knowledge and Will is there in no wise any difference. And since this is so, therefore art Thou Sovereign Good, since all other good lacks power, knowledge and will which is one and the same thing with its essence, and by its nature is inclined to corruption; to which inclination its nature had been contrary, were there no difference between its Being and its Essence.'

5. 'O glorious Essence! Thy Power can work no defect in Thy Being, but my power can work defect against my being; and this is so because my being is one thing, my essence another, and yet another my power. And, since my power is far other than my being and my essence, it can work against my being and my essence. But Thy Power is Thy Essence and Thy Being without difference soever, and therefore canst Thou do nought against Thy Essence and Thy Being—wherefore, O Essence, hast Thou Power eternal, infinite and complete, in Truth, Virtue, Glory and Perfection.'

6. 'After human kind is named humanity, which is of human kind the essence; after the chevalier is named chivalry; after the

just man is named justice ; and after the wise man, wisdom. In thy Deity art Thou, O God : he who speaks of Thy Deity, speaks of God, and he who speaks of God speaks of Thy Essence. For Thy Virtue suffices to be Thy Essence and Thy Being in truth, in glory and in perfection. And there is greater truth in that Thy Being and Thy Essence are One and the Same, than in that in the creature essence is one thing and being another, in that the just is one thing and justice another. Wherefore many that are just and chivalrous and human may differ in divers regards under justice, chivalry and humanity. But it is not thus with Thy Being and Essence, for Thy Glory and Perfection have virtue and truth, wherein is no diversity of Being and Essence.'

7. 'If there were no justice in the creature it were impossible that the just man should be created, even as it were a thing impossible that human kind should exist if humanity existed not. Wherefore when man and humanity and all things else existed not, there resided already in Thy Justice both justice and the "just," without there being the "just" in Thy Essence, nor in the just that is Thy Justice according to the creature, but rather justice and the just according to

Thyself. For even as man cannot be without that which is not man—to wit, elements, matter, form, accidents, nature and cause—even so in Thy Essence there could be neither justice nor the just, if therein there could be accident or quality or difference of Being and Essence, nor, if Thy Justice had need of aught but God and Divine Essence, could It be infinite, eternal, full of virtue, perfect and complete.'

8. 'Divine Essence! Ere ever he was made on whom Thou dost bestow Thy gifts, there was in Thee Liberality; for if Thou art Liberality and Liberality is Thyself, Thy Liberality is in no wise behind Thy Essence in Thy Eternity and Infinity. And the same is true of Thy Mercy and of the remaining virtues. Neither now, when there are creatures on whom Thou dost bestow gifts and forgiveness, are Thy Mercy and Liberality any greater. And were there difference between Thy Mercy and Liberality in Thy Essence, then hadst Thou not been liberal nor merciful till Thou hadst made the creature. And it were impossible that Thou shouldest have created any thing, hadst Thou not had Mercy and Liberality before creation was.'

9. Blanquerna considered that humility, dominion and patience are in the creature

qualities, but in God are Essence; and since these qualities are distant far from Essence, in comparison with the Humility, Dominion and Patience which are Essence, therefore Blanquerna adored Humility, Dominion and Patience, as Divine Essence and Being, and said these words: 'Humility that humbles not, and Dominion that has no domain, and Patience that is not patient cannot of their nature be Sovereign Essence in Goodness and Greatness that are eternal and to all creatures. Neither does it beseem the Essence of God that there should be humility as between greater and less, nor that there should be lord or vassal, doer or sufferer according to the rule of less and greater.' Now, while Blanquerna contemplated in this wise, he became troubled, and feared lest he should utter a contradiction; but, by reason of the height to which his understanding had risen in his contemplation, he knew that his imagination sinned in making a comparison falsely, and his memory recalled that to God must be attributed all good things that are in the creatures, inasmuch as they must of need be every one in the Divine Essence, lest it should follow that there were any imperfection in God. And since humility, dominion and patience are good things in

the creature, they must likewise be in the Divine Essence; but since in creatures they are not in so great perfection as in God, we must needs understand that in another and a nobler way Humility, Dominion and Patience are in the Divine Essence—a way unlike that in which they exist in the creature, wherein they are qualities of accident, having beginning and end.

10. As he contemplated, Blanquerna said that the Essence of his Beloved is immovable, in that He comprehends and is comprehended not; and unchangeable, in that He is eternal; and incorruptible, in that eternal are His Power, His Will, His Knowledge, His Virtue, His Perfection, His Justice. And therefore ought that so glorious Essence to be more often and more firmly in his remembrance, understanding and will, than any other essence or essences whatsoever.

11. 'The king, with his dominion, and with his strength, beauty, wisdom, power and justice, and with his other attributes likewise, has no more of human essence than the man that is of an ill-favoured countenance, and a vassal, and a poor man and of small power and knowledge; and this is so because the king may lose all these things aforesaid. But of the Essence of God and

of His Virtues is it not so; for, since this Essence and these Virtues are one and the same thing in Goodness, Greatness, Eternity and the rest, no other thing may have the Virtues of God, nor be His Essence. And therefore the Divine Essence is in Virtue, in Presence, in Wisdom, in Power, and in all that pertains to His Essence, in every place and through every place, in every time and through every time; and this thing may not be save in the Will of God alone.'

12. In this and in many another wise did Blanquerna contemplate the Essence of God, uniting virtues in turn with others, that he might make new argument and lengthier matter for the contemplation of His Essence. And, when he had ended his prayer, he wrote down the substance of his contemplation, and afterwards read that which he had written; but in his reading he had less of devotion than in his contemplation. Wherefore less devout contemplation is to be had in reading this book than in contemplating the arguments set forth therein; for in contemplation the soul soars higher in remembrance, understanding and love of the Divine Essence, than in reading the matter of its contemplation. And devotion accords better with contemplation than with writing.

CHAPTER IV

OF UNITY

BLANQUERNA turned his thoughts and considerations with his love to the contemplation of the Unity of God, and he said these words: 'Sovereign Good! Alone is Thy Goodness in Infinite Greatness and in Eternity and in Power, for there is none other goodness such as can be infinite, eternal and of infinite power; wherefore, O Sovereign Good, I adore Thee alone in one God Who is Sovereign in all perfections. Thou art one only Good whence all other good descends and springs. Thy Good of Itself alone sustains all good beside. Thy Good alone is the source of my good, wherefore all my good gives and subjects itself to the honour, praise and service of Thy Good alone.'

2. 'O Loving Lord! Greatness that art without beginning and end in Thy Essence full of virtue and complete in all perfection, Thou dost accord with one God alone and

not with many, because Eternity that is without beginning or end in its abidingness, accords well with Greatness which in Essence and Virtue has neither beginning nor end, but is itself both beginning and end in all its fullness. And were it not so, O Lord, it would follow that justice and perfection were contrary things in eternity, if eternity, which has neither beginning nor end in duration, accorded also with greatness in essence, which has finite and determined quantity. And since Thou, my God, art One with Thy Justice and Perfection, thereby is it signified to my understanding that Thou art One God eternal and alone.'

3. The memory of Blanquerna remembered the Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Wisdom, Will and Power of God. By His Goodness he understood a Power with more of Goodness than any other; by His Greatness, a Power that was greater; by Eternity, a Power more abiding; by Wisdom, a Power more wise; by Will, a Power more gracious than any other Power soever. Wherefore, when the understanding had comprehended Divine Power, the memory thought upon one Power alone, above all others Sovereign, and therefore the understanding comprehended that God was One and One only, for,

were there many gods, it were a thing impossible that the understanding could comprehend a greater and nobler Power than all beside.

4. Blanquerna considered the virtue that is in the plants and in things which Nature orders to one end, and his understanding comprehended that every thing that is in nature has one virtue which is lord over all other virtues that are in that body; and therefore Nature in each elemental body has natural appetite rather to one end than to another, since one end—that is, one perfection—has below it all perfections beside. While Blanquerna considered this, his memory bore his understanding to the comprehension of the end for which all men are made and created, and of how beasts, birds, plants, metals, elements, heavens, stars have one end only, namely, to serve man; and thereby is signified, according to the perfection of power, justice, wisdom and will, that all men are to honour and serve one God alone; for were there many gods, each god, according to his perfection and justice and power, knowledge and will, would have made and created men and creatures for many ends. As Blanquerna contemplated the Unity of God according to the manner aforesaid, he felt

himself to be uplifted exceedingly in his memory and understanding and will.

5. To man is given will, whereby he wills to possess for himself alone his castle or his city or his kingdom, or his possessions or his wife or his son, or his memory or his understanding or his will, and so of other things. And when to his hurt he finds his peer in these things, he is moved to passion thereby, which is contrary to Glory and Dominion. When Blanquerna had remembered all this, he remembered the Glory and the Dominion of God, and comprehended that if there were many gods and lords of the world, their glory and dominion could not be so great as is that of one God alone. And since there must needs be postulated of God the highest Glory and Dominion, there was demonstrated therefore to the understanding of Blanquerna that God is One and One only. And, that his understanding might rise to greater heights of comprehension, his will was greatly exalted in fervour to the contemplation of his Beloved, the Spouse of his Will. And he said these words :

6. ' True is it, O Lord God, that there is no other God save Thyself alone. To Thee alone I offer and present myself, that I may serve Thee. From Thee alone I hope for

pardon, for there is none other Liberality to give nor Mercy to forgive, save Thine only. Humble am I indeed if I humble myself to Thee. Lord am I, if I am Thine alone. Victory have I above mine enemies if I can only suffer for Thee. Wheresoever I may be, with all that I am, I give myself to Thee alone, and Thine alone I am, a guilty sinner. Of Thee alone I beg forgiveness, in Thee I trust, and for Thee I incur perils. Whatsoever may become of me, let it be all to one end, to wit, Thy praise, honour and glory. Thee alone do I fear, from Thee alone is my strength, for Thee I weep, for Thee I burn with love, and none other Lord will I have, save Thee only.'

CHAPTER V

OF TRINITY

BLANQUERNA was fain to contemplate the Holy Trinity of our Lord God, wherefore, at the beginning of his prayer, he begged of God that He would exalt the powers of his soul that they might rise to the contemplation of His Virtues, whereby he might contemplate His glorious Trinity. And therefore he said these words: 'Divine Essence, glorious and holy, in Whom is the Trinity of Divine Persons! I ask of Thee this boon, that it may please Thee to humble Thyself that my soul may rise to contemplate Thy Trinity with Thy Virtues proper, essential and common to the three Persons, and Thy three Properties personal and essential. I am not worthy to ask of Thee this boon, nor to receive it; but since Thou canst give it, and I therewith can the better love, know and praise Thee, for this cause I ask it of Thee, for my soul desires to know and love all these

things, that it may the better love and know, praise and serve Thee, and make Thy Glories and Honours loved and known.'

2. Blanquerna trusted in the help of God, and said these words: 'Never was it in creatures, nor is nor shall be, that infinite and eternal Good should proceed or be engendered, seeing that all created good is finite and determined in greatness and eternity. If in the creature there were a Good which was infinitely great in eternity, knowledge, power and will, it would indeed be possible that one infinite Good should engender another; for were it not so, it were impossible that in the creature there should be such an infinite Good as we have postulated above.' When Blanquerna had committed this to his memory, understanding and love, he remembered and understood that if the Sovereign Good exceeds created good in Greatness, Eternity, Power, Knowledge and Love, It must needs have also a higher and nobler work and actuality; for, had It not this, it were impossible that It should exceed created good in infinity of Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power and Wisdom.

3. When Blanquerna, by the help of God, had lifted up the powers of his soul, even to the highest degree to which he had been able

to raise them, he strove after another manner to raise them yet higher. And he fell to considering how great a Good it is that God should be engendered, Who is Good Infinite and Eternal, Powerful, Wise, Loving, Virtuous, True, Glorious, Perfect, Just, Liberal, Merciful, Humble, Patient, and over all things Lord. When Blanquerna had considered this for a great space of time, he thought again how great a Good it is that to God should be attributed a Procession of all these virtues aforesaid which are common to the Persons. And yet again he considered how great is that Good whereby God is engendered, and whence proceeds God, the Eternal and Infinite. When Blanquerna had considered all these things, he considered after the manner of negation how the Good of which he had thought might not be in the Sovereign Good. And immediately he felt his soul to be void of devotion and understanding, and returned to the consideration of that upon which he had thought by affirmation, and then he felt his soul to be full of remembrance, understanding and love of the Sovereign Good, and he fell to weeping and praising God Who granted him so high a degree of contemplation.

4. Blanquerna remembered in his soul

created virtue and was fain to lift it higher through the potency of Virtue uncreate. And his memory recalled these words : ' Philosophers have said that the world is eternal, and this they have said with intent to honour Virtue uncreate which must needs work in a manner both infinite and eternal. Wherefore, as they knew not in God His Trinity and His eternal work, they attributed to God an infinite and eternal work in the world, and in those things whereof the world is made. But it better beseems the Virtue of God to perform in Himself an eternal and infinite work in Power, Wisdom, Love, Perfection and Glory, than in any other thing that is not God Himself.' And therefore the perfect Justice, Wisdom, Glory and Truth of God signified to Blanquerna that the world had had a beginning, and that the Work of the Divine Essence in Itself, whereby the Father begat the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, is a Work infinite, eternal and wholly perfect. And were it not so, it would follow that the world, in receiving Eternity, would have just so much infinite Virtue as has the Divine Power in giving out Virtue unto Eternity ; and this is a thing impossible. When this impossibility was shown to Blanquerna, his

understanding was so greatly exalted that his will soared high in love to the Trinity; so that love gave afflictions to his body, to his eyes tears, to his heart sighing and devotion, to his mouth prayers and praises of his glorious God.

5. Fearfully did Blanquerna pronounce these words to the Holy Trinity with lips and mind: 'Sovereign Trinity All-Excelling, through Thy common Virtues my understanding soars that it may contemplate and love Thee, and in Thy Virtues personal and proper my understanding fails me when it has knowledge of Thee. But my will, illumined by the light of faith through Thy blessing, soars to love Thee, wherefore am I contemplating Thee by intellect and by faith without there following any contradiction.'

6. While Blanquerna contemplated thus the Sovereign Trinity, Error and Ignorance were fain to incline him that he should no longer believe in the Trinity of God, and he considered how in all trinity there was composition. Then Blanquerna thought once more upon the infinite Greatness in Power, Perfection and Eternity, and comprehended thus how it beseemed not that, if plurality and eternity created could not be without such composition, it should follow that the

Sovereign Trinity must needs be compounded. For as the Sovereign Trinity and Plurality is superior to plurality and trinity created, in goodness, greatness, eternity, power, and the rest, It must needs be above it also in simplicity ; for, if the Unity of God is in simplicity Sovereign over all unity created, the Sovereign Good must needs have plurality that It may be in simplicity above plurality created.

7. 'O Holy Trinity! In that I comprehend Thee not Thy Greatness is the greater and my understanding the less, and in that I believe without comprehending Thee is my faith greater than my understanding, and Thy Greatness than my faith. And this is so because Thy Greatness is infinite in all perfection, and my faith and understanding are limited and bounded by Thy Greatness. Wherefore, since through believing in Thee I am greater by faith than by understanding, if I understood Thee I should be greater in loving than in believing. And, were this not so, it would follow that love agreed rather with ignorance than with understanding, in the which case love would of necessity be less in the heights of understanding, and greater in its deeps. And this is impossible, unless there should follow contradiction of

merit or of understanding through faith, which remains that which it was, according to the diversity of objects between faith and understanding. This diversity we have signified above in the Divine Virtues common to all three Divine Persons and according to the Properties both personal and divine.'

8. To the end that he might use the art of contemplation, Blanquerna considered within himself generation in infinity and eternity, that he might not think Divine Generation to be like to that which is in creatures, which he could not conceive in his mind to be a thing of infinity and eternity. And hence he comprehended in Sovereign Generation simplicity without composition or corruption, and in the lower generation he could not believe there was neither corruption nor composition, because his understanding has knowledge that the generation of the creature cannot increase perfection in eternity and infinity in his understanding and memory.

9. 'O Holy Trinity! If Thou wert not, wherein would God be like unto man? Or how would that word be true which says: Let us make man in our image and likeness? And if Thou, O Trinity, art unlike any

trinity of ours, it is that Thou art a Being infinite and eternal in Wisdom, Power and Perfection.' Thus did Blanquerna contemplate the Holy Trinity, and thereto did he lift up the powers of his soul, even to such height as he could, that he might be obedient to the commandment of God which commands man to love God with all his strength, and with all his mind and with all his soul, —that is to say, with memory, intellect and will.

CHAPTER VI

OF INCARNATION

BLANQUERNA remembered the Holy Trinity of our Lord and God, that his understanding might comprehend how through the influence of the great Goodness of Eternity, Power, Wisdom and Will of the glorious Trinity, God should perform a work in the creature which was of great benignity, abidingness, power, wisdom and charity; and for this cause his understanding comprehended that according to the operation which is in the Divine Persons, it was fitting that God should take our human nature, in which and through which should be shown forth His Divine Virtues and His Works which He has in His Divine Persons; and that thus the wills of Blanquerna and all men beside should love God and His Works. Wherefore Blanquerna said these words:

2. 'Divine Virtue,' said Blanquerna,

'Thou art infinite in Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love and all Perfection; wherefore if there were aught else infinite in greatness, eternity and patience, Thou couldst infinitely work therein through greatness, eternity, action and the like, since Thou hast the power so to work, as that thing would have to receive. But inasmuch as all virtue is finite, save Thine, therefore neither in eternity nor in infinite greatness is any thing sufficient to receive the impress of Thy Work, without beginning of time or quantity. Now to show forth all these things Thy Wisdom was fain to create a creature greater in goodness and virtue than all other creatures and virtues created, and the Son of God was fain to be one Person with that creature, to show that Thy Goodness had been able to give Him greater Virtue than all creatures else, even as He could make Him greater than the creature and than all other creatures.'

3. 'Thy Human Nature, O Lord, has a glory greater than all other glories created, and this because its perfection surpasses all other perfection; and since Thy Justice, O Lord, has greater Goodness, Power, Wisdom and Love than any other, therefore it was fain to give greater glory and

perfection to Thy Humanity than to any other nature created. Whence, since this is so, it is most meet that all the angels, and all the souls of the saints, yea, and all the bodies of the just when the resurrection is past, should have glory in Thy Human Nature, and thereby rise to have greater glory in Thy Divine Nature.'

4. When Blanquerna had considered for a great space of time the things set down above, he felt his memory, understanding and will to be greatly uplifted in contemplation. Yet even so his heart gave no tears to his eyes that they might be bathed in weeping, and therefore did Blanquerna prepare to uplift the powers of his soul still higher that they might multiply devotion the more in his heart, and fill his eyes with weeping and with tears; for high contemplation goes ill save with weeping. Wherefore Blanquerna caused his memory to descend, and to think upon the vileness and the misery of this world, and the sins that are therein, and the great wickedness committed by our father Adam against his Creator in disobeying Him, and the great Mercy, Liberality, Humility and Patience of God, when it pleased Him to take human flesh and when He willed to give His Body to poverty, scorn,

torments, trials, and to vile and grievous death; although He had no guilt nor sin such as are ours. While the remembrance of Blanquerna called these things to mind, his understanding was lifted up to comprehend and follow his remembrance, and together they contemplated the lofty and Divine Virtues, to wit, Goodness, Infinity, Eternity, and the rest. And therefore the will had so much devotion from the nobility of the Virtues and the Passion and Death of the Nature of Jesus Christ, that it gave to the heart sighs and griefs, and the heart gave to the eyes weeping and tears, and to the mouth confession and praise of God.

5. For a great space of time did Blanquerna weep as he contemplated the Incarnation of the Son of God after the manner aforesaid; but, as he wept, the imagination strove to represent the fashion in which the Son of God conformed Himself to human nature; and since he might not imagine it, the understanding had no longer knowledge and Blanquerna fell to doubting, and his tears and sighs ceased, by reason of his doubt which destroyed his devotion and made it to vanish. When Blanquerna felt to what state his thoughts had descended, he lifted up once more his memory and understanding to the

greatness of the Goodness, Power, Wisdom and Perfection of God, and in the greatness of these Virtues his understanding comprehended that God may conform to Himself human nature, though the imagination know it not neither may imagine it. For greater is God in Goodness, Power, Wisdom and Will than is the imagination in its imagining; and in remembering and understanding thus Blanquerna destroyed the doubt which he had had concerning the Incarnation; and devotion and contrition returned to his heart, and weeping and tears to his eyes, and his contemplation was loftier and more fervent than at the beginning.

6. Long did Blanquerna contemplate the Incarnation of the Son of God after the manner aforesaid. And when he felt that his mind was wearied by one matter he took another, that through the renewing of the matter his mind might regain strength and virtue for contemplation. So Blanquerna remembered how the Holy Incarnation and Passion of the Son of God are honoured in the Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, etc., of God, and how in this world He has honoured with His Grace many men who render Him not the honour which they might. After this he remembered how many men there are

in this world who are unbelievers and honour not the human nature of Jesus Christ which God in Himself has so greatly honoured, but believe not, and blaspheme that same Nature, and hold that sacred Land wherein He took that Nature, and wherein, to honour us and restore us to the Sovereign Dominion which we had lost, He suffered Passion and Death. Then, after Blanquerna had fixed the powers of his mind upon that matter, his devotions, sighs, tears and griefs were renewed within him, and his mind soared higher and yet higher in contemplating the sacred Incarnation of the Son of God. And therefore he said these words: 'Oh Lord God, Who hast so highly honoured and exalted our nature in Thy Divine Virtues! When comes that time wherein Thou wilt greatly honour our remembrance, understanding and will, in Thy holy Incarnation and Passion?'

7. So lofty was the contemplation of Blanquerna that the powers of his soul discoursed with one another within his mind. Memory said that great Goodness performed a great work, and great Power worked great might. Understanding answered that great Mercy, Humility, Liberality and Love, conformed lesser virtues to greater. And Will said that

above all creatures he must needs love his Lord Jesus Christ. But at one thing he marvelled,—to wit, how that Jesus Christ so greatly loved His people, and willed to suffer for them so great Passion, and how God willed so greatly to humble Himself, and how in the world there are so many men, unbelievers, idolaters and ignorant of His honour. Understanding answered and said that that thing was matter for the will, how that it should have such devotion as to make a man desire martyrdom that the Incarnation should be honoured ; and that it was matter for the memory, how that it should have remembrance so lofty of the virtues of God that He might be exalted in such necessary demonstrations as should show forth to unbelievers the sacred Incarnation and Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

8. By the Divine Light the spirit of Blanquerna was illumined and inflamed, and he said these words : ' O Incarnation, O greatest truth of all truths, uncreated and created ! Wherefore are greater in number the men that scorn thee, and know thee not, neither believe thee, than they who honour and believe thee ? What wilt thou do ? Wilt thou punish so great and mortal failings ? O Mercy wherein is so great Benignity, Love, Patience

and Humility! Wilt thou pardon them?' So Blanquerna wept, and between fear and hope he sorrowed and joyed, as he contemplated the sacred Incarnation of the Son of God.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE *PATER NOSTER*

BLANQUERNA called to mind the Divine Virtues, and through them was fain to contemplate God in the *Pater Noster*, and to set the Virtues and the *Pater Noster* in his memory, understanding and will. Wherefore he said to God these words: 'O Father, Thou art Lord over us—that is, God the Father is Father of God the Son, Who is infinite and eternal in Goodness, Power, Wisdom, Love, Perfection and all His other attributes, and Thy Divine Essence is Father of the human nature of Jesus Christ by creation and by Benignity, Mercy, Liberality, Humility, and Charity. And therefore said Jesus Christ, when He made the prayer of *Pater Noster*, that in Thee is the personal Father, Father, rightly so called, of God the Son, and that Thou art that Essence, which is Father of His humanity, and likewise of all other creatures. Because, then, the apostles were creatures, and because they

believed in His Trinity and Incarnation, therefore our Lord Jesus Christ commanded them that they should say the *Pater Noster*.'

2. 'Thou, O Lord, art in the heavens God the Father of God the Son, which heavens are Thy infinite Greatness, Goodness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love, etc., and these are Essence in which is God the Father Who begat God the Son; and, since infinite perfection is in Thy Essence in Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, etc., therefore with the heavens, which are high, may be compared Thy Virtues, which are so high that none others save Thine alone suffice to reach heights so exceeding great. By which heights and excellences Thou dost make known in the *Pater Noster* that Thou art Father, because Thou art higher than all creatures, and because in Thy heavens are Thy works, whereby Jesus Christ called Thee Father, of Himself and of us. Wherefore, if Jesus Christ, Who is God and Man, in the heavens and equal with Thee as touching His Godhead, and upon the earth as touching His Manhood, bears Thee witness that Thou art His Father and ours and art in the Heavens, it is meet and right that we, who are here below on earth, should believe His witness and say this prayer of *Pater Noster*.'

3. 'Hallowed be, Lord God, Thy holy and glorious Name, in Thy Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, etc., which is the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, through Generation and Procession, without which Generation and Procession there could not be in Thy Essence these proper and diverse Names eternally and infinitely in Goodness, Virtue, Truth and Perfection. But since the Father is eternal, the Son eternal and the Holy Ghost eternal, and each one of these Persons is infinite in perfection, therefore are there in Thy Essence Names eternal and infinite in perfection, and therefore is it worthy and meet that Thy Personal Names should be hallowed in Thy Divine Essence, eternal, infinite and complete.'

4. 'Not alone, O Lord, does justice require that Thy Name be hallowed in Thy Virtues, but of reason also it is worthy and meet that It be hallowed among us here below throughout all the world; and therefore hast Thou, O Lord, established upon earth the Holy Roman Church, that Thy Name may be named and known throughout all the world, and hallowed in the souls of men and in the holy Sacrament of the Altar. And that the Pope and his colleagues the Cardinals and the other prelates may not be

neglectful, nor for other business cease to strive for the hallowing of Thy Name, therefore hast Thou given us commandments with Thine own mouth in the *Pater Noster* and at the hour of Thy passing from this world, which commandments Thou didst make to Thy ministers the Apostles after Thy passing.'

5. 'Thy Kingdom, O Lord, is Thy very Essence and Thy Personal Properties, wherein is Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, etc. May that Kingdom come, O Lord, to our souls, through remembrance, understanding and love of Thy universal Properties and Thine own Personal Properties, to the end that Thy Kingdom may be honoured among us here below and we ourselves may rise to dwell in Thy glorious Kingdom perpetually.'

6. 'Thy Will is done, O Lord, in the heavens and on earth. In the heavens it is done, because Thy Essence is Goodness wherein are Goodness and Will which issues from the infinite Father and Son in Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, etc. Perfected is Thy Will, O Lord, in the Son that is begotten eternally and infinitely in all perfection; and therefore is it the will, O Lord, of Justice, Perfection, Virtue and Truth that Thy Will be done on earth, that is, in the human

nature which Thou didst take, wherein is earth corporal and elemental. And this Will was done by the work of the Holy Ghost when He gave Thee flesh in the womb of the Glorious Virgin.'

7. 'O Lord, so lofty and so marvellous is Thy Will that throughout this whole world Thou art to be obeyed through Thy Goodness and Thy Power, Thy Justice and Thy Perfection. Thou art obeyed, O Lord, through Thy Goodness, Humility, Patience and Mercy, in those that desire to serve Thee and who upon earth withdraw apart their memory, understanding and love, that they may contemplate and serve Thee. And Thy Will is obeyed, O Lord, through Thy Justice, Dominion, Power and Truth, in the punishment with pains of hell of those who may not flee from Thy sentence and domination, and who fix their remembrance, understanding and will upon earthly vanities, despising the blessings of Heaven.'

8. 'Our daily bread, O Lord, is Thy sacred and glorious Body sacrificed upon the Altar. Thy Body is in the heavens, yet daily It is among us here below in this Sacrifice, which in our minds we see through the working of Thy great Benignity, Wisdom, Power, Humility, Mercy and Will. For as the eyes

of our body and our other senses fail us when we see this Bread—that is, Thy Body and Blood—even so, O Lord, may the powers of the soul suffice, Thou Thyself helping us, that we may see this our Bread through the working of the Virtues of Thine Essence. For if Thy Power is great in infinity, it follows that under the form of bread may be sacrificed one Body of Flesh and Blood in divers places, signifying Thy Power to be infinite. And if Thy Benignity, Humility, Will and Liberality are infinitely great according to the infinity of Thy Perfect Justice, it is signified thereby that Thou wilt give us our daily bread in this world which is to-day, for this is the day of choice between damnation and salvation, which day for every one of us will pass away.'

9. 'Forgive us, O Lord, the debt that we owe Thee, for we can never pay Thee, being sinners every one in our father Adam. We can never pay Thee, so great are our debts to Thee, because Thou didst create us, and didst will, through love of us, to become Man, to be tortured and crucified for us, and to die. And since Thy Perfection is infinite in Thy Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, etc., Thou needest not, O Lord, that we should pay Thee; for didst Thou so need, there

would be in Thee want of perfection. And since we resolve[1] the debts which we owe to our sensual natures, in mortifying them with fastings, afflictions and prayers, even as we mortify our understanding by believing the marvels which Thy Virtues work, then if Thou, O Lord, forgavest us and pardonedst us not our debts, as we for love of Thee forgive our debtors, there would be in us greater justice and perfection than in Thyself. And this may not be; whence, O Lord, it is fitting that Thou shouldst not require of us our debts, which we could in no wise pay Thee.'

10. 'Well do we know, O Lord, that Thy great Goodness, Love, Liberality and Mercy make Thee to desire us to have great merit, that Thy Justice may with reason give us great glory and perfection, and therefore dost Thou allow us to be tempted by the world, the flesh and the devil. And since we are poor in memory, understanding and love, it befalls us many a time to be conquered and overcome by our temptations. Wherefore since Thou, O Lord, art so great in Benignity, Mercy, Liberality and Humility,

[1] The original has *lexam*, from a verb which occurs throughout the paragraph in the double sense of 'loose' and 'forgive.' It is difficult to bring this out in the English.

give Thou to us that which we merit not, if we endure, but conquer not, our temptations, for it suffices us that we are in Thy Kingdom and have Thy Glory without merits of our own.'

11. 'Deliver us, O Lord, from the evil that we have when we know Thee not and love Thee not and forget Thee; for in this evil all others have their beginning. And since that deliverance is to be effected, O Lord, by the remembrance, understanding and love of Thy Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, etc., if Thou Who hast created us and canst aid us defendest us not neither deliverest us from evil, Thy Mercy and Humility will be without love, and we shall be creatures without a Lord Who loves His subjects, and this is ill-beseeming. Wherefore my memory hopes, O Lord, in Thy succour.' Thus and in many other ways that can neither be told nor written did Blanquerna contemplate in his soul the Virtues of God together with the *Pater Noster*.

CHAPTER VIII

OF *AVE MARIA*

BLANQUERNA was fain to contemplate the Queen of Heaven, Earth, Sea and all that is, with the virtues of her glorious Son, our Lord God. And therefore he said these words: 'Hail, Mary! The Goodness of thy Son, Who is infinitely great in Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love, etc., gives thee salutation, because the Son of God took thy nature, wherewith He is yet one Person only, equal in Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, and the like, to the Father and the Holy Ghost and to all essence in goodness and virtue.'

2. 'Full of grace! Power, Knowledge and Will, which are one power, knowledge and will in essence, and one power, knowledge and will in filiation, have been incarnated in Flesh of thy flesh and Blood of thy blood. This Power, Knowledge and Will is one Son and one only of the Sovereign

Father. And through this Son there is created, within thee, a Son Who is Man, one Person in unity with a Son Who is God. And therefore, O Queen, art thou filled with grace through the Son of God and thy Son that is Man. And the Son that is God is thy Son, Who is one Person with the Son of God. Wherefore, since this is so, from the inflowing of the fullness of grace whereof thy Son is full, art thou, O Queen, full of grace which is greater than we can remember or comprehend or love. And from thy fullness of grace comes an inflowing to the memory, understanding and will which contemplate the fullness of thy grace. Blessed then, O Queen, be thy grace, which is so full that it fills all those who through the same shall attain perpetual fulfilment.'

3. 'The Lord is with thee, O Queen, namely Virtue, Truth and Glory—that is, the Son of God. This Virtue, Truth and Glory have Infinity in Power, Knowledge and Will. This Infinity is Sovereign Good in eternity. The Lord within thee, O Queen, is God and Man: God, through His Divine Father, and Man in that He took of thee flesh and blood. And that this Lord is within thee, O Queen, makes thee to be in great virtue and truth, who after thy Son art

pre-eminent in Virtue, Truth and Glory over all other creatures. And this is the reason thereof, that, excepting thy Son, the Lord is in no creature so virtuously, truly and gloriously as in thee, for to no other creature has He given such power to receive His Virtue as to thee. Therefore, since by His Virtue thou canst receive greater virtue than any other creature, His Glory is more truly in thee than in any other.'

4. 'Blessed art thou, O Queen, among women; for greater perfection, greater justice, greater liberality is given to thee than to any other woman soever—yea, than to all men and to all angels and to all other creatures. For the Perfection, Justice and Liberality which are given to thee, are Christ thy Son, Who is Perfection of all other perfection and Justice of all other justice, and Liberality of all other liberality; and beside thy Son there were none who should have such Being or Perfection. From this Perfection, O Queen—to wit, thy Son—comes it by justice that thou art blessed above all women, because thou hast more of perfection than they all. Then since in thee is such perfection, that Perfection which is of Justice and Liberality wills that thou shouldst give

perfection to every soul—in its remembrance if it remember thee, in its understanding if it understand thee, and in its will if it love thee. And were this not so, there would be a lack of justice and liberality in thy Son, as also in thee, which is a thing unbeseeming and impossible.'

5. 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb, O Queen, with Mercy and Humility, which have united that fruit with the Divine Nature, a union greater than any other that may be between God and the creature. And therefore, O Queen, to no other creature, nor to all other creatures, has the Divine Nature given so much of mercy and humility, as to the Fruit of thy womb. For this thy Son, glorious Man, is Man in the Son of the glorious God, Who makes Him to be Man, while He is yet with Himself one Person, namely God and Man. And that Person, Who is God, and is infinite Mercy and Humility in Goodness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love and the like, has blessed thy Son in His being one with Infinity of Mercy, Humility, Goodness, Eternity, Power, etc. Wherefore, as this is so, O Queen, what fruit may be so blessed or more blessed than the fruit of thy womb?'

6. 'O Queen! So great is the brightness of the sun, that it gives radiance to the moon, the stars and the air; and since Mercy and Humility are greater in thy Son than is the sun's brightness, therefore, O Queen, there comes to ourselves and to the angels an influence from the blessing of the fruit of thy womb, greater than is the brightness of the sun and of all other lights created. And since in thee, O Queen, Mercy and Humility have so greatly exalted thy fruit, and have set thee in such excellent places, it is right that thou shouldst remember us according to thy greatness in mercy and humility. If Mercy has been pleased to honour thee, do thou by thy mercy be pleased to remember us. And if Humility willed to incline itself to thee that thou mightest be exalted, do thou incline thy thoughts to us that to them we may rise and receive the blessing of thy womb.'

7. 'The Holy Ghost hath come upon thee, O Queen, and hath overshadowed thee with the power of the Most High. That Holy Spirit, O Queen, has come upon thee with the Lord of all the world—yea, and of the world to come. He has overshadowed thee with a Virtue which comprehends all virtues,

and with virtues which are one Virtue. The nature which He has taken in thee He has overshadowed with infinite Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, and the like, and thee He has overshadowed with that nature which He has taken in thee, through the which thou art mother of every virtue and of all virtues created. All of these derive brightness from thy shadow, and through thy shadow they are guided to the brightness of thy Son. By thy shadow, o'ershaded by shadow human and divine, the Saints in glory are in eternal shade, being shielded from the perpetual fire, in which is no shadow of respite from the heat neither of forgiveness.'

8. 'O Queen of Heaven! Thy Son for reasons twain is Lord over every creature: the first, in that He is God; the second, in that He is Man conformed to God and made one with Him. Then as thy Son is doubly Lord of all the world, thou thyself for reasons twain must over all the world be lady pre-eminent: the first, in that thou art Mother of God; the second, in that thou art Mother of that Man Who is made one Person with God. And as this is so, do thou, O Lady, have remembrance of that whereover thou art placed, that He Who hath placed thee

there may have pleasure therein, and that we ourselves may be exalted in the nobility of His Dominion.'

9. Thus in the *Ave Maria* did Blanquerna contemplate Our Lady with the virtues of her Son; and, while he contemplated, his remembrance and understanding and will were so highly exalted that he took no knowledge if he were weeping or no. And when he had ended his contemplation, he knew and remembered that his heart had given no tears to his eyes, that they should be in weeping and tears as he contemplated. And since it was ill-beseeming that he should contemplate Our Lady without weeping, therefore Blanquerna fell to contemplating her anew and to remembering the patience of her glorious Son on the day when He was stripped of His garments, spit upon, beaten, crowned with thorns, nailed to the Cross, wounded and killed. He remembered how that Our Lady loved Him with wondrous love, and that, while men tormented Him, He looked upon her, and she upon Him, with looks devout and sweet. How that Our Lady lamented over her Son when she saw Him die; how that she was sore afflicted, as she saw herself divided from Him by death; how that she knew Him to have done no wrong, but to be

Lord and God. And while Blanquerna thus contemplated, and led the powers of his soul to consider the Virtues of God and of Our Lady, his heart was so moved with devotion that his eyes thereby had abundance of weeping and of tears.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE COMMANDMENTS

BLANQUERNA remembered in the Gospels the answer that Jesus Christ had given concerning the Commandments, and he was fain to contemplate these with the Divine Virtues of God. And he said these words to his Will: 'Thou shalt love thy Lord God, for thou art commanded thereto by the Goodness, Greatness and Eternity of God. Whence if thou, O Will, wert so great that eternally, without beginning or end, thou couldst love God, thou wouldst be constrained thus to obey His Commandment, for the Lord Who commands thee thus is infinitely good and eternal. But since thou hast a beginning, thou couldst not love before thou wert in being; yet now that thou art, thou art constrained to love, and, if thou lovest not, thou art disobedient to Infinite and Eternal Goodness; for which disobedience He will doom thee to infinite and eternal affliction and torment.'

2. The Understanding said to Blanquerna that the Power, Wisdom and Love of God commanded the Will to love God with the whole heart. And as he understood that the Will could love God wholly through His Power, Knowledge and Will, he said that the power which it had of not loving God in its totality was not of the Power, Knowledge and Will of God, but was of guilt, fault and sin, inclining to powerlessness whatsoever wills not to be power in the Power, Knowledge and Will of God, by Whom is sustained, kept and defended power created against power of guilt, if all created will gives itself to love and obey the commandment of God.

3. While the Understanding of Blanquerna reflected, and mentally spake to his Will the afore-mentioned words, the Will replied by asking if it were a licit thing to love nought else save only God. The Understanding answered and said that it might love all things created so that it loved them with respect to God—that is to say, if it loved them that it might the better love God.

4. As the Understanding and the Will of Blanquerna thus discoursed, the Memory recalled how in the Commandment it is said that man is to love God with all his soul ; and being itself one of the three powers of the

soul it held itself obliged with all its might to remember Virtue, Truth and Glory. And Memory said to Understanding that she recalled how that he, being one of the three powers of the soul, was wholly constrained to comprehend the Virtue, Truth and Glory of God. When Understanding had comprehended the argument which Memory recalled and related to him, he was conscious of the many times that he had failed to comprehend the Virtue, Truth and Glory of God, that the Will through faith should have the greater merit. And since to the Understanding in its totality has been given as great a commandment as to the Will, therefore the Understanding exalted itself in all its power to comprehend the Virtue, Truth and Glory of God, and besought forgiveness because through ignorance it had gone astray, that faith might be greater in the Will.

5. Blanquerna said to God that His Justice was perfect, and that therefore the commandment which He gave must be just and perfect to all thought; which commandment would have no perfection if it commanded human thought otherwise than to love wholly the Justice and Perfection of God, since thought is wholly created and dowered by the Justice and Perfection of God. While

Blanquerna thus spake concerning thought, and concerning the Justice and Perfection of God, the Will said to the Understanding that she set her love more firmly upon the greater part of that which he comprehended when he comprehended with all his power. Thus was Understanding reproved as to that in which for long he had erred—to wit, that he had not risen to comprehend all that he might, that he might have the greater glory. For the commandment is given to the whole of thought, which signifies all the power of the understanding. As Will said these words to Understanding, came contrition to her, with consciousness that she had not commanded Understanding to love God with all his power, as commandment was given to her. Then, since Will had contrition, Memory recalled that many a man disobeys the commandment of God, yet thinks that he obeys it, by exalting faith and mortifying the understanding, through which mortification comes error, sin and ignorance.

6. Again Blanquerna considered the commandment of God to the Will, to wit, that man shall love God with all his heart; and then, that he shall love Him with all his soul; and again, that he shall love Him with all his thought. Wherefore in these three times

in which the commandment is made, has man knowledge of the Liberality of God which brings mercy to his understanding, that it may comprehend divers works in the three powers of the soul, according to the diversity of the three commandments aforesaid. For in that God commands man to love with all his heart is signified faith, whereby the will may love above that which the understanding can comprehend. In that He commands man to love Him with all his soul is signified that all three powers of the soul should be fixed equally on some end equally remembered, comprehended and loved. And in that He commands man to love Him with all his thought is signified that God commands man wholly to exalt his understanding, that in remembering God he may have greater remembrance, and in loving Him greater will. And the greatness of these lies in the exaltation of the understanding, whereby God loves to be widely known.

7. Blanquerna said to his soul that to love God with all his heart and soul and thought is the first commandment; wherefore the understanding comprehended the second commandment in its relation to the first, in which second commandment was signified equality of love between Blanquerna and his

neighbour, in that God commands the will that man shall love his neighbour even as himself. And since He says not ' with all his soul and all his thought ' nor even ' with all his heart,' there is made a difference between the first commandment and the second, by which difference is signified that the first has precedence over the second, and that the second is subjected and must be ruled by the first ; so that man, in loving, comprehending and remembering God above himself and his neighbour, may do obedience and reverence in honouring the Humility and Dominion of God.

8. To love, remember and comprehend God above all beside, and one's neighbour as oneself, are two commandments which are the beginnings of the others. He who in these two commandments is obedient, obeys God in all the rest ; and he who in any of the others is disobedient to God disobeys Him in the first two commandments ; and he who loves himself and his neighbour equally with God is disobedient to the first commandment and to all the rest.

CHAPTER X

OF THE *MISERERE MEI DEUS*

With the Virtues of our Lord God Blanquerna contemplated God in His Essence and Trinity and Incarnation in the sayings of the holy Prophets, as exemplified in these words: 'David begged forgiveness of God according to His Mercy, and therefore at the beginning his soul considered together Grace and Mercy, with Goodness and Eternity; for the Goodness of God is greater than any other goodness, and His Eternity than any abidingness soever. And since Goodness and Eternity accord with Greatness, and the Mercy of God is great over all other mercy, therefore David besought Goodness for the great good of piety, of gifts and forgiveness; and he besought Eternity that such gifts and forgiveness might be eternal and without end. And this petition he made because in the Divine Persons there is conformity in Personal Properties, which are in Essence Goodness, Greatness, Eternity and Mercy.'

2. 'It beseemed not David to make distinction in the Essence of God between Greatness, Mercy and Justice; for these are one thing only. In praying that God would pardon him according to His great Mercy, he signified His great Justice; for it beseems great Mercy according to great Justice to give and to pardon, and this signifies that it is greater Justice that great Mercy should forgive great faults and bestow great gifts than that lesser mercy should grant gifts and forgiveness. And, were this not so, it would follow that great Mercy and great Justice would have between each other no concord or agreement.'

3. When Blanquerna considered the words aforesaid, his soul rejoiced greatly in his hope of the Mercy and Justice of God and of their greatness; and therefore he understood how great good, both endless and eternal, was prepared for the man that begs for mercy from the Greatness and Justice of God. When Blanquerna in the Essence of God had contemplated Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Mercy and Justice, he entered into another consideration, and contemplated the virtues aforesaid in the three Divine Persons, saying these words:

4. 'O Lord God Who art Father, great in

Thy Power, Knowledge and Will, by virtue of Thy Goodness, Eternity, Mercy and Justice! Behold David, in the person of the Roman Church, beseeches Thy Son, Who is great in Power, Knowledge and Will by virtue of Goodness, Eternity, Justice and Mercy; for in that he besought Thee to have mercy according to Thy Greatness, Thou must needs have mercy with Greatness as mighty as is Thine Own, which we ourselves could not receive but with that which is equal to Thy Greatness, namely Thy glorious Son, Whom Thou didst give us in the Incarnation and Redemption. Through this Thy Son is signified to us Thy glorious Trinity and Incarnation; for if in Thy Divine Nature there were no distinction of Persons, Thou couldst neither give nor pardon according to Thy great Mercy, for we should have no strength to receive it. But since Thy Son was pleased to take our flesh, therein could our poor nature receive it, since in that Thy Son is God, He is equal in virtue with Thy Greatness, and in Him and through Him Thou, even as Thou art, canst give and pardon and judge.'

5. Blanquerna remembered Truth, Glory and Perfection in God, and through the words of David he comprehended that Greatness

accords with Truth, Glory and Perfection, which Greatness must needs be infinite, for were it finite it would not accord with Truth, Glory and Perfection, which are Virtues infinite in God. Whence, as Greatness and Mercy are infinite virtues, and as David besought mercy according to the greatness of God, it is signified thereby that the Son, in Whom is Truth, Glory and Perfection, besought the Father that His Gifts and Forgiveness might be equal to the infinite Grace which the Father has in Truth, Glory and Perfection. Whence, as this is so, it is signified thereby that David besought God for His Gifts and Forgiveness in the person of the Humanity of Jesus Christ, to which Humanity they could not have been given had union not been made between it and some Person of equal Truth, Glory and Perfection, and further, with some Person residing in the Divine Essence.

6. 'Liberality, Humility, Dominion and Patience, O Lord God,' said Blanquerna, 'are in Thee Virtues infinitely great; for, were they not so, they would be contrary to Thy Mercy, which is infinite, and it would follow that David would have begged of Thee gifts and forgiveness which Thou couldst not have given him through defect of Thy Virtues.

And since it is impossible that in Thee there should be any defect at all, Thy Liberality must needs have within it a gift proportionate to itself; in Thy Humility there must be humility wherein all may be humbled; and Thy Dominion must have that which is proportionate to itself, that Thy Mercy, likewise so proportioned, may have a Lord Who can give. And it is beseeming that Thy Mercy have patience in giving the same patience to itself. And were this not so, David might have asked for greater Mercy than Thou couldst have or give him, which is a thing wholly unbeseeming.'

7. According to the manner aforesaid, Blanquerna contemplated God in His Essence, Trinity and Incarnation, with his Art, expounding the words of David together with the Divine Virtues. By this Art man may reveal the secrets and the dark sayings which are in the words of the Prophets, to the end that the understanding might exalt itself to search the deep things of God, that its comprehension might be higher, and in the heights of the understanding the will might be lifted up to love God greatly in His Essence, in His Trinity, in His Incarnation and in all His Works.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF HOLY CHURCH

In the Sacraments of Holy Church Blanquerna was fain to contemplate the virtues of God, and he spake to God in these words: 'O Lord God! In the Holy Sacrament of Baptism willest Thou to show forth the greatness of Thy Power, Knowledge, Will and Virtue; for by great virtue of Power, Knowledge and Will dost Thou reveal to our human understanding a most strange and marvellous work in Baptism, when, by water and by the words of the priest and by the faith of the sponsors, the infant, who may not use understanding or will, is in the Sacrament cleansed and purified from original sin. This work, O Lord, is great and marvellous above all works of nature, signifying that Thy Virtue is so great in Power, Knowledge and Will that Thou hast Power, Knowledge and Will

to work in supernatural wise all that which is of Thy good will and pleasure.'

2. 'As in a city, Lord, there are many and various offices, so in the city of Holy Mother Church are the offices of the seven Sacraments. As all these offices serve to ennoble the city, so the seven Sacraments serve to demonstrate the noble use which Thy glorious Virtues have in the creatures, as is therein shown forth and revealed. And therefore, Lord, the Goodness and Greatness of Thy Dominion prove how all creatures are obedient in the seven Sacraments to Thy Power, Knowledge and Will.'

3. 'Glorious God! As the infant has no eyes of reason till he is grown, the sponsors must needs have the virtue which Thy Virtue gives and renders to the infant when he is of the age to be confirmed and to perform that which his sponsors have promised for him. That the sponsors should have such virtue, that at the confirmation of the child their obligation should be fulfilled, and that the child should receive virtue through his confirming by the Bishop—all this is significant of great virtue, truth, perfection and dominion, which in the Sacrament of Confirmation perform all that Thy Will demands, without opposition of

any other power, which is powerless against Thine.'

4. Blanquerna was fain to enter into contemplation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar with the Divine Virtues; and therefore at the beginning he directed the powers of his soul towards that contemplation, to the end that, when he should be engaged therein, he might not be impeded by insubordinate remembrance or will, nor yet, through his bodily senses, be disobedient to the Divine Virtues. And therefore he said to his soul these words:

5. 'O soul, my friend, thou knowest that the humility of God is great, and great equally therewith His Power; and since humility and power are one thing in virtue with wisdom, will, truth and perfection, the bodily eyes which see bread made Flesh in the Sacrifice of the Altar are little prone to be disobedient to the Divine Virtues aforesaid, which are so great that they have Power and Will and Knowledge, that beneath the form of bread there may be Very Flesh and Very Blood of the Body of Jesus Christ. And if this could not be so, it would follow that the eyes had truer power to take for objects corporal things than hast thou, my soul, to take Divine Virtues and their works. Furthermore it would

follow that there would be lack of Greatness in the Virtues of God, and that Truth would accord better with bodily things than with spiritual. And this is a thing ill-beseeming, since God is spiritual Essence and His Virtues are spiritual, and the body and the bodily senses are things corporal and corruptible.'

6. For a great space Blanquerna conversed in his mind with the three powers of his soul. Understanding answered him, saying that he comprehended such Greatness in the Virtue and the Power of God that He could cause Very Flesh and Very Blood to be, under the form of bread; but he comprehended not the reason why that God should will to make that Sacrament nor why He had need to make it. Blanquerna answered Understanding saying that he should unite in his comprehension the great Goodness, Wisdom, Love, Perfection, Humility, Liberality, Mercy and Patience of God, and comprehend how great is the Power shown by God in that there may be accidents without substance, and substance without accidents. So great a work cannot be performed in the course of nature; therefore, if it be performed by the Power of God, that Power is seen the more clearly to be above nature. And since the Will desires

this in order that the Power may be seen to be the greater and nobler, it is shown to have more of love than has Power ; and if neither the Power could work it nor the Will desired it, so great a good would not accord with Knowledge, nor would Humility be so great towards us, nor would Mercy, Liberality or Patience accord so well with Goodness and Greatness ; and because in this work we may know that the nobility of the Divine Virtues accords best with Greatness, Virtue and Truth, hereby is signified the reason why God has willed to create and order the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

7. ' Understanding, my friend ! ' said Blanquerna, ' strive thou in virtue, for thou hast more virtue in understanding, than have the eyes of the body in seeing, or the senses of taste and touch in tasting and touching, for in many a thing thou dost see these err and fail daily. Let not thyself be vanquished by the bodily senses, but defend thyself from them by the Divine Virtues. Comprehendest thou how wondrous a work is the Trinity in God, and how far above nature is the Incarnation of the Son of God ? To show forth the wonder of this work, God was pleased to institute the Holy Sacrifice, that thereby we might have daily remembrance of the

wondrous and supernatural work of the Divine Virtues. For as we ourselves, corporally and physically, make the sign of the figure of our Lord God Jesus Christ on the Cross, even so in the Sacrifice of the Altar is made the sign of the miraculous and spiritual Work which is performed by the Divine Virtues.'

8. Understanding considered deeply the words which Blanquerna spake to him, and comprehended by these words that the imagination had for long impeded him from comprehending the Sacrament of the Altar, because it caused him to represent it to himself more powerfully in its physical and natural aspect than as in the Virtues and the Works of his glorious God, to which Virtues and Works imagination could not soar. And therefore Understanding performed the words of Blanquerna, and he soared aloft in adoration and contemplation of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

9. There was debate between the Memory of Blanquerna and his Understanding, which Sacrament was more opposed to the bodily senses,—the Sacrament of the Altar or the Sacrament of Penance. For the Memory recalled that man has sinned against God, and that the Holy Apostolic Father is a man,

and that men are his ministers who absolve and pardon and give penance to their fellow-men. And Understanding said that the Sacrament of the Altar manifests itself in bodily and sensible form, having indeed bodily form, but a form invisible to the bodily senses. For a great space Understanding and Memory held debate upon this matter and they came to Blanquerna for judgment. And Blanquerna said that the Sacraments were equally opposed to the senses, for by the Divine Virtues, which are incorporeal, were created and instituted the two Sacraments aforesaid and likewise the rest, all of them supernatural, that their sovereignty over virtue natural and created might be shown. And when Blanquerna gave this sentence, he spake these words:

10. 'As the Divine Virtue causes the virtue of Flesh and Blood to exist under the form of bread, so also It causes the virtue of pardon under the form of a man,—to wit, the priest. And as the virtue which is of Flesh and Blood, under the form of the Host, is not of the Host, but of God, so the virtue of the priest in pardoning is not of the priest, but under the form of the priest is the Virtue of God.'

11. 'Blanquerna!' said Remembrance,

'as thou dost speak this subtly, couldst thou prove to me that since God has power to make the Sacrament of Penance He must needs will that this Sacrament should be, for God can do many things which His Will desires not to perform?' Blanquerna answered, and said that as in the great Goodness, Mercy, Humility, Virtue of God and in His other attributes it is signified that God wills and needs must will according to the greatness of His Justice, which wills that the Virtues be shown forth in exceeding greatness through the Sacrament of the Altar, so by that same ordinance, great Justice wills, and must needs will, that the Sacrament of Penance exist, that the Divine Virtues may be shown forth, and men may be directed in contrition, penance, restitution, counsel, affliction, repentance, hope and other things like to these, which could not be without the Sacrament of Penance.

12. To signify the order which is in the three Divine Persons, and how by means of this order the Person of the Son came to take our human nature, and how lack of order beseems not Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Sacrifice, Penance, Matrimony and Unction, therefore is it fitting that there be an Order of Priesthood whereby may be ordered each

one of the Sacraments aforesaid. And this is signified in the Divine Virtues and in the Greatness according to which they are signified and demonstrated to us.

13. In the Virtues aforesaid Blanquerna perceived the Order of Matrimony, even as he had seen in them the other sacraments. And he saw that as Justice signified that in temporal things a difference is made to divers men, so also it made it meet that a difference should be made between man and woman, that chastity and virginity should be contrary to lasciviousness, and that from sensual things the powers of the soul may take order and arrangement and the commandments of the Divine Sovereignty may be obeyed.

14. 'In the Earthly Paradise,' said Memory to Will, 'God created matrimony, and in significance of that Matrimony He wills that in this world the Sacrament of Matrimony shall exist; for, if it were not, the Wisdom and Will of God would not unite with Perfection in showing forth the great Glory of God which accords with Justice, to which is opposed irregular union between man and woman. Through such irregularity man is unworthy of coming to the glory of God, for it would be against both Greatness and Per-

fection if man, after irregular union between man and woman, came to the Truth and Glory of God. And Divine Wisdom and Virtue would have placed greater virtue in the bodily elements which duly join and unite, that a body may be duly begotten, than in the wills of man and woman, to the end that children may be begotten and the human race preserved in the world.'

15. Blanquerna remembered that in this world man has a beginning, a mean and an end, and that for this cause, to signify the eternal Dominion of God, Divine Wisdom has ordained that at the entrance of man into the world the first sacrament should be Baptism, and that Extreme Unction should be the last; and thus is signified the submission in which man has lived in the world in his obedience to the first sacrament and to the others which are between the first and the last. And since Justice has greater reason to judge one that is obedient unto law, and Mercy to pardon him by Confession, Contrition, Confirmation and the other sacraments from first to last, therefore the great Justice and Sovereignty of God wills that Extreme Unction may be a sacrament, that thereby a seal, as it were, may be set upon all the other sacraments, and the sacrifice shown forth of

the Body of Our Lord God upon the Cross, which Body was anointed with His sacred Blood, with the tears which flowed from His Eyes, and the Sweat which came to Him in the Agony of His Death.

CHAPTER XII

OF VIRTUES

BLANQUERNA remembered the seven virtues which many a time had aided him against the Spirit of Evil, and in them he was fain to contemplate the Divine Virtues which the seven virtues had revealed to him. Wherefore he said these words: 'O Faith, that art worthy of all love, great art thou in believing great things of God, and good art thou since by thee man comes to eternal happiness; illumined with Divine Wisdom art thou through the light of grace; thou dost love that which is true, for the Love of the King of Heaven makes thee love His Virtue and Truth, His Glory and Perfection.'

2. 'O Faith, my Friend! Thou dost believe in God, Unity of Essence and Trinity of Persons. A great thing is it to believe in things invisible, to believe that infinite Good is that which is infinitely and eternally engendered from infinite and eternal Good. And

to believe that from both issues infinite and eternal Good is a belief truly great and marvellous, and illumined with the wondrous brightness of the light of grace. And therefore, O faith so lovely, since thou art great, my soul must needs give great thanks and render a tribute of great love to the Eternal Greatness and Goodness which has made thee to be so great, and in Thy Greatness has made me great likewise.'

3. 'Through thee, O Faith, I do believe that by great Charity, Power, Knowledge, Humility and Mercy, the Son of God took flesh of our Lady Saint Mary, which flesh He united with Himself, becoming therewith one Person having Natures human and Divine without corruption, alteration, composition and accident of Divine Nature, and without change of the human nature which He assumed. Wherefore I believe these things so great and marvellous by the exceeding Greatness and Virtue, Doctrine, Mercy and Benignity of the Sovereign Good; and therefore my soul is greatly constrained to remember, comprehend, love, honour and serve the Divine Virtues which thou, O Faith, dost make to shine in me so numerously and with so great grace and such brightness.'

4. Blanquerna discoursed in his soul with Hope, and said that of great things man should have great hope; for from such great Goodness, Greatness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love, Virtue, Truth, Glory, Perfection, Justice, Liberality, whence is engendered and whence issues such great good as the virtues aforesaid, should be hoped and desired great happiness. For it is impossible that, from such great and noble things as those aforesaid, there should not flow an influence exceeding great of so great happiness to lovers of the Divine Virtues.

5. 'Consider, O Hope, how great a thing it is that the Son of God, Who is so great in virtues, should unite Himself with man's own human nature, which is of creature, and to give that creature to death and torment for us sinners and that thou mayst be greater in trusting in the virtues of the Sovereign Good. See, O Hope, how that God has created things great and many and various and beautiful and virtuous and good: angels, heavens, sun, moon, stars, earth, sea, men, beasts, birds, fishes, plants, metals and other things created. Wherefore, as these things aforesaid are so many, so noble and so great, therefore, O Hope, it behoves thee to trust and hope in Goodness, Greatness,

Eternity, Power, etc., for great blessings and graces.'

6. 'O Hope, were there no Trinity nor Incarnation, thou couldst not hope for such great gifts and blessings from God as now thou canst. For the Virtues of God would not show themselves to be so great in our sight as in fact they show themselves, seeing that Trinity and Incarnation exist. And if Resurrection were not, thou wouldst be less than thou art, for we should not see the Charity nor the Power, nor the Mercy, Humility, Dominion and Patience which in God are so great, as we see them in believing the Resurrection to be true. And therefore, O Hope, we see, thou and I, together with the Divine Virtues, Resurrection, and the greatness of the Divine Virtues together with the Resurrection. And therefore, O Faith and Hope, do ye agree in being the greater in yourselves, and we are the greater in you, and we have greater agreement thereby with belief.'

7. 'O Divine Love, that hast within thyself a Lover infinite and eternal in loving! From thee, that art so great in thy heights in all perfection, shall come all graces; for if in Thine Essence there are Persons three, Beloved and Loving, Eternal and Infinite in Power, Knowledge, Will, Virtue, Perfection

and Glory, from that great inflowing of love which is in thee so much will come to us here below that we shall love to honour and serve no other, save Thyself alone.'

8. 'It is the nature of Good that it shall engender other Good, and it is the nature of Power that it shall engender other Power; and the same is true of Virtue, Glory and Perfection. Wherefore, since thou art so great and so noble, O Love, for thou art infinite in Goodness, Eternity, Wisdom, Power and the like, how may it be that we, who are thy creatures, created by thee anew, thy slaves whom thou hast bought, are not enamoured of thee more strongly? Wherein, O Love, is the accord which thou hast with Liberality, Mercy, Humility and Patience? For with such accord there must needs be Piety in thee, and in ourselves must there be happiness, hope and love.'

9. 'O Divine Justice! Among ourselves Justice is predicated of the just; and in Thee just and Justice are one and the same thing. Then, since Thou art just and Justice infinite in Being and Essence without difference, and since that which is in Thee just and Justice, Being and Essence, is Goodness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love, Virtue, Truth, Glory, Perfection, Mercy, Liberality, Humility, Do-

minion and Patience, it must needs be, according to such universal Virtues and Properties, that Thou art to ourselves Just and Justice, with Mercy, Humility, Charity and Patience, and that of Thee we have Justice, whereby we may live justly, praising, honouring and serving Thee. And if in ourselves there is no justice of that Justice which is in Thee, where then is the influence which from Thy Justice comes to us? And where is the accord that is between Thy Justice and Thy Goodness, Charity, Mercy, Humility, Liberality and Patience?'

10. 'O Divine Essence! The great Justice which is in Thee causes the Just, Infinite, Eternal in Goodness, Power, Wisdom and Charity to engender Another Just, Infinite, Eternal in Goodness, Power, Wisdom and Love, and from both of these Just aforesaid proceeds Another, Eternal and Infinite in Goodness, Power, Wisdom and Love. Wherefore, as this is so, there proceeded from this Thy Justice so great an Influence that it made One of ourselves to be one Person with One of the Three that are in Thyself. Whence, from the great inflowing of Justice which came to One of us with Charity, Mercy and Humility, there will come to us all that whereby we may become just in loving,

knowing, honouring and serving Thee. And if this Thou dost not do, where is the influence of Humility, Patience, Charity and Liberality that is in Thee? Or Who is that Lord that is ours, since it is a reasonable thing that a Lord should love, help and bestow gifts upon his subjects?'

11. 'I pray Thy Power, Knowledge and Will, O Lord God, for prudence, which Thou wilt give me through the Benignity which is in Thee, according to Justice and Mercy. Through Thy Power and Knowledge canst Thou give it me, and since I ask it therewith to love Thee, therefore Truth and Justice should make Thee to love Prudence in me, that thereby I may know Thee, and knowing, love Thee, and through this knowledge and love may know and will to praise, honour, obey and serve Thee.'

12. 'O Greatness of Justice! If Thou wilt have this Justice, O Lord God, upon us sinners to punish us, then mayest Thou exercise it the better if Thou dost punish us who know Thy Trinity and Incarnation and yet honour, love and serve Thee not, rather than those who know not Trinity in Thee, and who knowing not the Incarnation, believe it not. And if Thou wilt have Mercy, Humility and Pity on us, Thou mayest the better

have it if we know Thee and love Thee, than if we are disobedient to Thee through ignorance. Wherefore, as this is so, then, according to all these reasons and many besides, Thou wilt give Prudence to ourselves, faithful Christians, and to unbelievers alike, that we may know and love Thee, since Thy Liberality accords with Thy Will, which has created us principally that we may know and love Thee before all things else.'

13. 'Ah Temperance, my friend! Daily do I need thee against my enemies, who hinder me from contemplating the virtues of my Lord, for Whose sake I have come to this hermitage. I beg for thee of the Virtues of the Lord Who has created thee, for I need thee in order to serve them. Father and mother, kindred and wealth have I left that in this hermitage I may company with thee. Without thee can man do nought against gluttony or drunkenness, though he wear honest raiment or embrace the hermit's state or the religious life. And I may not have thee without the Goodness, Greatness, Wisdom, Power, Love, Virtue, Humility, Mercy, and Liberality of the Lord, in Whom are all these Virtues.'

14. 'O Temperance, man cannot overmuch remember God, nor understand nor

love Him ; but by surfeit of remembrance, understanding and love, with weeping and fasting, afflictions and vigils, the body weakens and languishes and dies, and the soul may not as fervently or continuously contemplate the Virtues of God. Therefore, O Temperance, do I need thee both in body and spirit : give thyself to me that thou mayest possess me and be my ruler, and no longer be in the servitude of my gluttony and my belly.' In this manner and in many another did Blanquerna pray for virtues created to Virtues Uncreate that he might therewith serve God.

CHAPTER XIII

OF VICES

BLANQUERNA remembered the seven deadly sins whereby the world is in disorder, namely the world created by the Virtues of God. And therefore Blanquerna enquired of Divine Goodness: 'Whence come these demons aforesaid, to wit, the seven deadly sins, which destroy the world?' Wherefore Blanquerna said these words: 'Sovereign Goodness, that art so great in Virtue and Perfection, and that in Eternity and Nobility art above all creatures! Whence have come Gluttony, Lust, Covetousness, Sloth, Pride, Envy and Anger? For these seven beasts destroy, corrupt and ruin the good things which are Thine by creation and sovereignty. And since Thou art so powerful, wise, loving and virtuous, wherefore dost Thou suffer that so much evil, deception, error, affliction and ignorance should be in the world through the seven demons aforesaid?'

2. ' If Thou, O Goodness, wert evil or defect of good, these seven deadly sins might have come from Thee. Wherefore, since Thou art Fullness of all fullness, and since Perfection is contrary to defect, and since all sin and evil must needs have a beginning, let Thy Eternity, then, which existed before such beginning was, tell me whence have come sin and defect.'

3. Blanquerna contemplated Sovereign Goodness in Greatness, Eternity, Power, Wisdom, Love, etc., according to the manner aforesaid, and he felt in his soul that Memory and Understanding were holding converse. Memory said to Understanding that she recalled how that Will desired Gluttony, Lust and their companions. And Understanding answered that the desire that desired Gluttony or Lust or other vice is born of the will, and therefore the will is to blame because from it proceeds the desire which desires sin, and through that desire the understanding which comprehends sin is to blame, and the desire and the free will with that will inclines to desire sin. And therefore the memory which recalls all these things is to blame. And since Memory, Understanding and Will are creatures of Sovereign Goodness, and give occasion to

remember, understand and love sin, therefore said the Understanding of Blanquerna to his Memory, justifying the Goodness of God, that the seven demons have their beginnings in the works of Remembrance, Understanding and Will, which treat of things displeasing to the goodness of God.

4. 'O Divine Wisdom! Thou that art Light of all lights, show me the manner and the art whereby I may mortify the seven vices in my memory, understanding and will.' Then Memory recalled the Divine Virtues; Understanding comprehended the shortness of life in this world and the pains of hell; Will loved God and all His Virtues, ceased to love sin and prayed for pardon, and despised the vanity of this world. And Blanquerna felt in his soul that his vices and sins were mortified through the working of his remembrance, understanding and will. And therefore he said to Divine Wisdom these words:

5. 'O Sovereign Doctrine! From Thee comes virtue, from Thy Power comes power, and from Thy Love comes desire to the soul which desires to remember, comprehend and love Thee. When memory desires not to remember Thee, nor understanding to comprehend Thee, nor will to love Thee, come

wrongs and faults from that which the will has no will to desire, and from that which it wills to desire in remembering, comprehending and loving or loving not. And therefore, O Sovereign Doctrine, be Thine all my remembering, understanding and desiring, together with my memory, understanding and will, that I may contemplate, remember, comprehend and love Thy Virtues, and cease to love vices, wrongs and sins, to the end that Thy Praise, Thy Honour and Thy Dominion may daily be in my memory, understanding and will.'

6. 'O Sovereign Liberality and Mercy! Thou hast given me memory to remember, understanding to comprehend, and will to love Thy Virtues. But these suffice me not if Thou give me not remembrance in remembering Thy Virtues, understanding in comprehending them, and will in desiring them, and if Thou give me not the seven Virtues which are opposed to the seven deadly sins. I pray Thee, too, to give me remembrance, understanding and will to remember, understand and cease from loving gluttony, lust and the other vices. Wherefore, since Thy Power can give me all these things which are so needful to me, and since for all these things Thou hast created me, I pray Thee to grant

me gifts whereby all my powers may honour Thy graces.'

7. 'O Glory and Perfection! To give the power to sin is to give occasion for having faith, hope, charity and the other virtues. The gift of the power to have faith, hope, charity, and the like, is a gift against gluttony, lust and the other vices. Wherefore I pray Thee to give me these virtues, and therewith freedom as to sin, that Thou mayest grant me to remember, comprehend and love Thy graces, and to remember, comprehend and cease to love my sins and the vain delights of this world.' Blanquerna wept and sighed as he prayed for these gifts, and God granted him that which he desired, and Blanquerna rendered Him thanks with tears. The contemplation and devotion which Blanquerna had, and the art and manner thereof, none can tell it neither explain it, save only God.

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